The **essential** magazine for Amiga enthusiasts

AMIGA SHOPPER

Issue **70** Christmas 1996 **£4.50** US $9.95 ● Hfl 19.95

CD Power



PLUS:

Pretium
The new accounts package

DrawStudio
In-depth preview

Epson Stylus 200
Brand new printer

Discover what CD-ROM technology can do for you

Packed full of essentials!
Full details on page 6

Inside this issue

- **Wheels of Fire:** A complete feature on the recent advances in the Amiga's CD technology. The new drives, the new Squirrel MPEG hardware and a round-up of the best CD-ROM software for your Amiga.
- **Mission Impossible?:** Until now the PC has never been able to emulate the Amiga. UAE is a real and capable software solution. We have a special report including an interview with the program's author.
- **DrawStudio:** A detailed preview of the new drawing package promising to set new standards.
- **Pretium:** From over the pond comes a new accounts package with PC compatibility, but does it do the job?
- **Epson Stylus 200:** Rarely has a printer been updated so often, so what's new this time?
- **Artworks Christmas clipart:** A festive release.
- **X-DVE 2.6:** A further update to the video effects package brings yet more useful features.
- **CD-ROMs:** The latest CDs appraised and rated.



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Editorial



As you can see, we've optimised the page layout this issue so that we can make the very best use of all our pages. It's just as well really because we're jam packed with reviews again. Strange, isn't it, that in a "dying market" as we're so often told, so many great new products are being launched. I only hope that enough people buy them to encourage continued support.

This month, because of the release of the long awaited Squirrel MPEG and a set of new CD-ROM drives, we have been out finding out what CD has to offer. What a drive, software and even films can do for you.

There's also an in-depth preview of the new structured drawing package DrawStudio. As we discovered, it is going to go a lot further than any previous package and it promises to be a real tool for novices and experts. You can find out more about its features on page 16.

There's also a brand new accounts package for home users called Pretium and a new printer from Epson. Can updating the Stylus again so soon really be worth it? To get us in the festive spirit we've got a review of some professional Christmas clipart and an update to the excellent video effects package X-DVE, now in version 2.6. There's also the usual roundup of new CD-ROM releases.

As if all this wasn't enough, there's the usual Amiga Answers and Public Domain as well as the tutorials on CanDo and Blitz BASIC. We've also got the first installment of a two part HTML tutorial which takes you one stage further on from the basics of web page design which we covered last month.

Finally, and they were received with much pleasure, there's some really positive letters in this month's Talking Shop. Keep them coming. It's good to hear from supporters of the Amiga instead of just its detractors.

Until next month.

David Taylor,
Deputy Editor

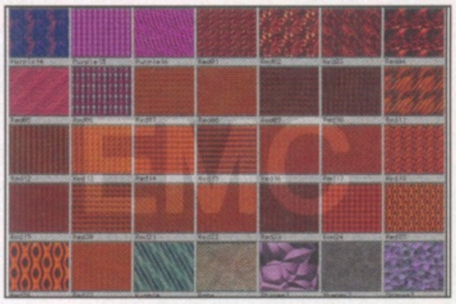
ShopperDisk

Brilliant. There's no other word for it.

Full index over the page

The **essential** magazine for Amiga enthusiasts

AMIGA SHOPPER



Eight of the very best quality CD-ROMs that you really can't do without. Turn to page 18.

Weird Science

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Aminet Set 3, dated July 1996, consists of 4 gigabytes of software in 9,000 archives. The software is on four compact discs and has included the full versions of Imagine 4.0, XiPaint 3.2, Octamed 5.0 and some commercial games. With 95 megs Utilities, 79 megs Documents, 408 megs Text Software, 12 megs Disk/HD Tools, 7 megs Hardware related, 756 megs Pictures & Animations, 208 megs Graphics software, 394 megs Graphics & Sound Demos, 563 megs Games, 685 megs Music modules, 28 megs Music software, 131 megs Communications and more. In fact the contents of Aminet CD's 9 to 12.

AMINET SET 3



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The Amiga System Booster CD enables users to really make the most of their computers with a superb collection of tools to push the capabilities of the Amiga to the limits. Nearly all the fantastic utilities can be started by simply direct from the compact disc. No de-archiving required. The the contents include a vast collection of screen blankers, mouse tools & commodities, backup, file management, cache programs to optimise system performance, data recovery, CD-ROM utilities, virus killers and a whole host more. This CD-ROM provides for beginners and professionals.

SYSTEM BOOSTER



£49.95

MAGIC PUBLISHER

Magic Publisher comprises of four compact discs and on this unique CD-ROM set you will find all you need to create professional looking documents. There are more than 10,000 Fonts (Colour Fonts, Bitmap, IFF, Adobe, Intellifonts, Truetype & DMFs), more than 5,000 clipart. Many of these are exclusive to this compact disc. Full commercial versions of Final Writer 4 SE and Wordworth 4 TD are included. Both rated as great word processors on the Amiga. Tools for creating WWW pages along with backgrounds and special clip art for this purpose is also included. A 100 page booklet contains previews of all the fonts and cliparts.



£29.95

Aminet Set 2, dated November 1995, consists of 4 gigabytes of software in 12,000 archives. The software is on four compact discs and has included the full contents of Aminet CD's 5 to 8. With Utilities, Documents, Text Software, Disk/HD Tools, Hardware related, Pictures & Animations, Graphics software, Graphics & Sound Demos, Games, Music modules, Music software, Communications, Amiga Development software, Business software and more. All of the archives are easily accessible with a simple Index menu system allow easy unarchiving with complete search and find facilities.

AMINET SET 2



£14.99

The Amiga Developers CD from Amiga Technologies comes complete with the all the developers tools and docs provided to the official developers. Included are the complete CD32 developers tools with Build CD and ISO CD, Envoy 2.0 package, Enforcer, Workbench 2.0, 3.0, 3.1 tools and documents with the updated native developers kit, SANA II package and the installer package. Also included is a vast amount of info. A must for Amiga enthusiasts.

AMIGA DEVELOPERS CD



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MODS ANTHOLOGY

A collection 18,000 music modules arranged of four compact discs all sorted by composer, groups and type. All stored ready to use from the compact discs. Provided with 11 megs of Module lists and 25 megs of module players for many different computer platforms. This 7 years titanic work provides over a 1,000 hours of music enjoyment along with information on may of the composers whose work is featured.



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Aminet, the Worlds largest collection of freely distributatble Amiga software. Up to 10,000 users access the archives every day and countless programmers publish directly via Aminet. This CD-ROM collection, on four compact discs contains approx. 4 gigs of in 12,500 archives. Set 1 contains the contents of Aminet CD's 1 to 4. Categories include Utilities, Documents, Text Software, Disk/HD Tools, Hardware, Pictures & Animations, Graphics & Sound Demos, Games, Music, Communications, Development, Business software and more. Index facilities also included.

AMINET SET 1



£49.95

The Amiga Repair Kit CD comes complete with the all with all the tools required to backup and rescue your precious data on hard drives. Disk Salve 4 will rescue and restore most damaged, corrupt and even deleted files from floppies, hard disks etc. During the process it will attempt to fix all problems caused by software failures or physical damage. RDB-Salve 1.1 is a superb program that will allow you to restore your valuable data even if the Rigid Disk Block has been destroyed or over written. Recovery can recover files from normal or corrupted disks. Essential Amiga tools.

AMIGA REPAIR KIT







Meeting Pearls 3 (Software Collection) £ 9.99

Workbench Add-on CD (Utilities) £ 24.95





Giga Graphics Four CD-ROMs Image Collection £ 19.95

Xi-Paint v. 4.0 24 Bit Image Manipulation £ 49.95





Global Experience Commercial Demos Software £ 24.95

Art Studio 24 Bit Paint Package £ 39.95

£14.99

AMINET CDs



£14.99

Aminet, the worlds largest Amiga archive, provides compact discs of the sites latest software uploads. Each volume contains about 1.1 gigs of archives with a superb menu system for un-archiving the files and a simple search facility to help you find exactly the file required. The search facility will even list the compact disc that the file is on. The latest Aminet CD's contain a theme. The Aminet 14 14 theme is business with the full version of Turbo Calc 2.1 included. Aminet 15 is available in November and Aminet 16 available in December. Aminet CD's 12 to 14 are also still available. Each Aminet CD costs just £ 14.99 and provides the very latest Amiga shareware software on CD.

AMINET 16 AVAILABLE DECEMBER 1996

International Distributor:

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Grenville Trading International GmbH
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Tel. +49 7741 83040
Fax +49 7741 830438
Email: amiga@gtigermany.com

SCHATZTRUHE



£11.99

The Euro CD contains a vast variety of programs and data for the Amiga in the Aminet mould. However this CD differentiates itself by have the contents ready to run without de-archiving. The contents include Animations 36 megs, Commercial 21 megs, Demo's 65 megs, Disk tools 12 megs, Fonts 12 megs, Games 57 megs, Misc. 6 megs, Modules 110 megs, Music 21 megs, Objects 12 megs, Pictures 118 megs, Presentations 23 megs, Printer 1 meg, Programs 23 megs, Samples 4 megs, System 10 megs, Text files 26 megs, Utilities 16 megs and Vidules 3 megs. Full English docs. and menus.

EURO CD VOL. 1

IN-TO-THE-NET INCLUDES OUT-OF-THE-NET

£19.95

Getting an Amiga connected to the Internet is one of the most difficult tasks due to the complex installation routines of AmiTCP and the lack of any real guidance. Not only will this situation change but you will now be able to get connected to the Internet and the WWW without a hard drive or the complicated setting up of the software. Our extensive networking skills have really been put to the test providing a simple connection from a compact disc providing a pleasant introduction and connection to the internet. Most of the difficult setting up is done automatically for you with the connection program provided. All that is required is the answers to a few simple questions. In addition the CD contains all the tools required for both the beginner and expert, full instructions on getting connected and many very helpful documents on the Internet and WWW. The tools include AmiTCP, Mail, FTP, WWW and many more. In addition there is a section on WWW page creation with clip art and creation tools. Easy Hard Drive installation possible but not required.

Wondering what all this World Wide Web is all about, worried about expensive connection and telephone bills, concerned that it may not be for you. Well check it out without the connection or telephone charges with 'Out-of-the-Net'. This compact disc contains the contents of actual WWW sites for you to browse with the Amiga browsers provided, no online costs at all. It is all included ready to run directly from the compact disc. The CD acts as an pseudo Internet provider with the sites readily available on the compact disc. There is a diverse variety of sites and subjects covered to give an excellent feel for the WWW whilst you browse for free.

UPGRADES AVAILABLE

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£ 24.95
Miami Registration
£ 24.95

THE LEARNING CURVE

£19.95

A MAGICAL JOURNEY THROUGH EXCITING DIVERSE SUBJECTS

A CD FOR ALL AGES

The Learning Curve CD presents a fantastic and magical journey through exciting subjects brought together for the first time on an Amiga CD. Containing over 32,000 files this title will delight and interest both young and old with the vast diversity and quantity of Amiga Educational and Informational programs featured. All of the programs can be run directly from the compact disc with no unarchiving on any Amiga, (Workbench 2.04+.) Encyclopedias have been scarce for the Amiga and educational compact discs have been virtually non-existent, well now you have a unique CD providing productive entertainment for all ages. *Just a few of the categories.*

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Art	Fairy Tales	Science
Computer	Mathematics	Astronomy
Desktop Utils	Spelling	Biology
Electronics	Languages	Books
Engineering	Literature	Chemistry
Geography	Drama	Ecology
Health	Music	Geology
History	Mythology	
Hobbies	Philosophy	

SOUNDSTUDIO

£34.99

Upgrades £24.99 Please Call

SoundStudio has arrived. With fabulous new features including full mixing facilities, save modules as samples, notation editor (with printing), 64 channels, new midi commands, more Toccata support, no sample size limits, fastmem facility and more. SoundStudio has lifted Amiga music creation to new heights. *A must for all musicians.*

SOUNDS TERRIFIC 2

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The music and sounds files can be auditioned from an easy to use interface for both a PC & Amiga. Included are 4,400+ modules, 400 extra large modules (over 300k each.) 795 Screamtracker modules, 1,000+ categorised midi files, 4240 IFF samples, 620 categorised WAV samples, 1,000+ Walkabout Instrument samples in WAV & IFF formats, 100's of utilities for Amiga and as a bonus the complete MidiCraft collection of Midi files. *Now includes Octamed 6 CD FREE.*

NETWORK CD 2

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The very best in CD32 and Amiga Networking has just got so much better. This CD is an absolute must have for all Network CD owners. The concept and operation has been improved in every possible way. The CD32 boots in about 45 seconds, with more memory available and fake fast ram to improve speed. One button press on the Amiga can set-up any program to run on both machines, including the entire Sernet set-up at the speed of your choice on both machines. No more difficult set-up routines. Sernet now runs at various speeds and is now the fastest ever. A keyboard and mouse can be emulated on the CD32. Twin Express can now be controlled from DOpus. Serlink allows easy downloading of data. Plus so much more. *The best way to join a CD32 to an Amiga*

DEM ROM

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The Dem Rom CD contains over 1,000 digital elevation maps (DEMs) from the USGS. Along with these digital elevation maps are thumbnail renderings of their topographical maps in Jpeg format for easy previewing. Dem Rom originally appeared on Light Rom 3. The digital elevation maps can be used with any program that accepts the DEM format such as Vista Pro, Scenery Animator or World Construction Set to create beautiful still images or fantastic flights through your favourite scenery. DEMs are royalty free.

MULTIMEDIA BACKDROPS

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The Multimedia Backdrops CD contains 100 backdrops designed for Desktop Video and Multimedia work in the IFF24, TARGA and TIFF file formats in NTSC (752x480) and PAL (768x576) resolutions. The INDEX directory provides thumbnail renderings of all the backdrops for easy previewing. *Fabulous quality images.*

WEIRD TEXTURES

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LIGHT ROM GOLD

£19.95

The very best from Light Rom 1, 2 and 3 with over 6,000 Lightwave objects and scene files. Light Rom Gold was created for those who did not purchase Light Rom 3. The material on Light Rom Gold is compatible with all versions of Lightwave on all platforms. This material is presented using the content directory method for all users of Lightwave 4,0 and higher. All of the Lightwave objects and scene files are represented with thumbnail renderings for easy previewing.

IMAGINE PD 3D

£19.95

Imagine PD 3D consists of thousands of Imagine 3D objects created by it's Amiga and PC users from around the world using Imagine 1.0 up to Imagine 4.0. The objects fall into many different categories including Anatomy, Animals, Aviation, Botany, Buildings, Computers, Fonts, Furniture, Household, Kitchen, Land, Logos, Misc., Music, Phones, Robots, Ships, Space, sports, Video, Vehicles, Weapons and many others! Creating the objects is the hardest part of the 3D rendering so *remove the drudgery out of 3D.*

LIGHT ROM 4

£29.95

Light Rom Four features new royalty free material created with Lightwave 4.0 & 5.0 versions.

LIGHT-ROM 4, a 2 CD-ROM set for the Amiga, Mac, Windows / NT features all new Lightwave objects and scene files. In addition there is a bonus CD-ROM of 3,000 Jpeg Textures, see below. LIGHT-ROM 4 also includes a collection scene files by Alan Chan. This set contains wholly new material and is an absolutely superb resource for Lightwave.

3000 JPEG TEXTURES

£14.99

The 3,000 Jpeg Textures CD contains over 3,000 textures in the Jpeg format. There are thumbnail renderings of every texture for easy previewing. The textures cover all categories including Brick, Bump Maps, Carpet, Cloth, Fabric, Formica, Granite, Greenery, Images, Marble, Organic, Rock, Skin, Stone, Stucco, Tiles and Wood. Realistic high quality textures for a variety of uses are provided in the universal Jpeg format.

MULTIMEDIA EXPERIENCE

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Info Nexus 2 also available for £19.95 with Data Nexus FREE. Info Nexus is a directory utility providing easy file management.

The award winning Multimedia Experience provided for users to create their own stunning multimedia presentations with images, text, video and sound. With the new low price all users can start multimedia.

IBROWSE

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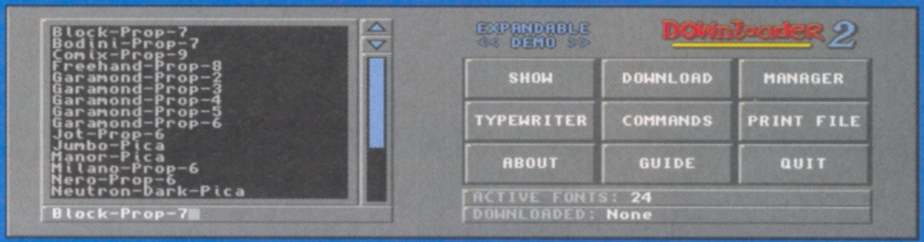
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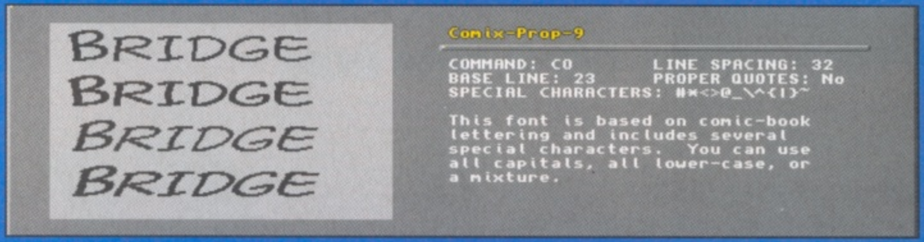
Cover disk

David Taylor *introduces a selection of programs which can be of real use to Amiga users everywhere. The very best that Shareware has to offer is right here.*

This month we've got a couple of main programs which should prove very useful indeed. Expand the capabilities of your printer and make use of a powerful MUI file manager with preferences. Aside from these, we've also got a big selection of indispensable utilities which perform all sorts of tasks and all the code for this month's Blitz BASIC tutorial.



The interface for Downloader 2 is easy to use and offers you new features for your printer.



This Downloader 2 demo allows you to test all of the 39 fonts available and then download four of them for use with your printer. Each font comes with a brief description.

Application**Zone**

Downloader 2

Author: Ernest Ruckle

This is a demo of the latest version of this excellent program. It allows you to expand your printer capabilities and it works with all Epson-Q compatible printers. Download up to 39 new fonts which are just good as the letter quality ones which come with your printer. There are typewriter and file-printing modes and the program also comes with a Protext printer driver to allow simple DTP using Protext 6.6 and an ARexx interface. You can even vary text styles and fonts midway through a line.

An instant command mode gives you control over your printer and lets you send commands to download fonts invisibly from the Shell. The Protext driver uses proportional fonts to get an accurate result and you can write your text in any word processor and then save it in Downloader recognisable format allowing you to make use of the new fonts.

The program has an easy to use interface, and comes with a built-in helpfile giving you more information about the program and how to use it. This demo has four of the 39 fonts for you to download – although you can see them all by printing out a test page. The demo can be expanded to the full version by obtaining a code from the author which costs only $15. Make sure you send all your details and details of your printer to Ernest Ruckle at 13 Parnell Street, Waterford, Ireland.

Because of copyright restrictions, we could not alter the tooltype on the icon for the document, so if you have installed to a hard drive, the document won't open correctly. You need to open the icon's information window (click once on the icon, and then select Information from the Icon menu on Workbench). Here change the Default Tool to More – remember to press return and save the changes. If you have installed directly to a hard drive, the program will work automatically, but will quickly ask you to locate special file the first time it starts – this is easy – you'll find it in the default directory; just choose it and click OK. If running from floppy, the program will run automatically because it's a replica of the original.

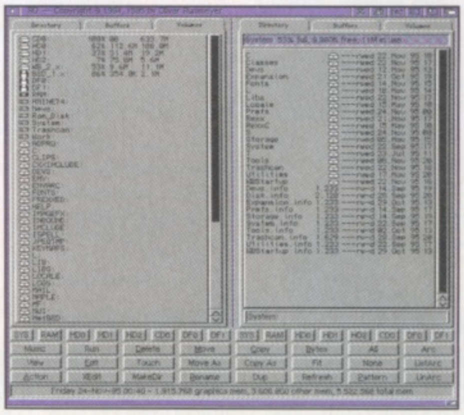
RO

Author: Olivier Rummeyer

RO is an Intuition based, user-configurable file manager. It requires a hard drive and after you have unpacked it to one, you need to install it for it to work properly. The installer uses the standard Commodore Installer utility, but you will also require MUI to run RO.

When the program is installed, you can use it to speed up your housekeeping tasks. On the main window you'll see a split between two directory listings. You can change these listings to show Directories, buffers or volumes. The buffers are paths which are remembered by the program when you have looked at them to save time re-reading them. You can set the program so that specific paths are looked up when the program starts in the preferences. The Listviews themselves can be resized by clicking and dragging. They also support drag and drop for file movement.

Above each directory listing is a text box displaying certain information – such as disk space used and free space remaining. This text field also shows which half of the window is



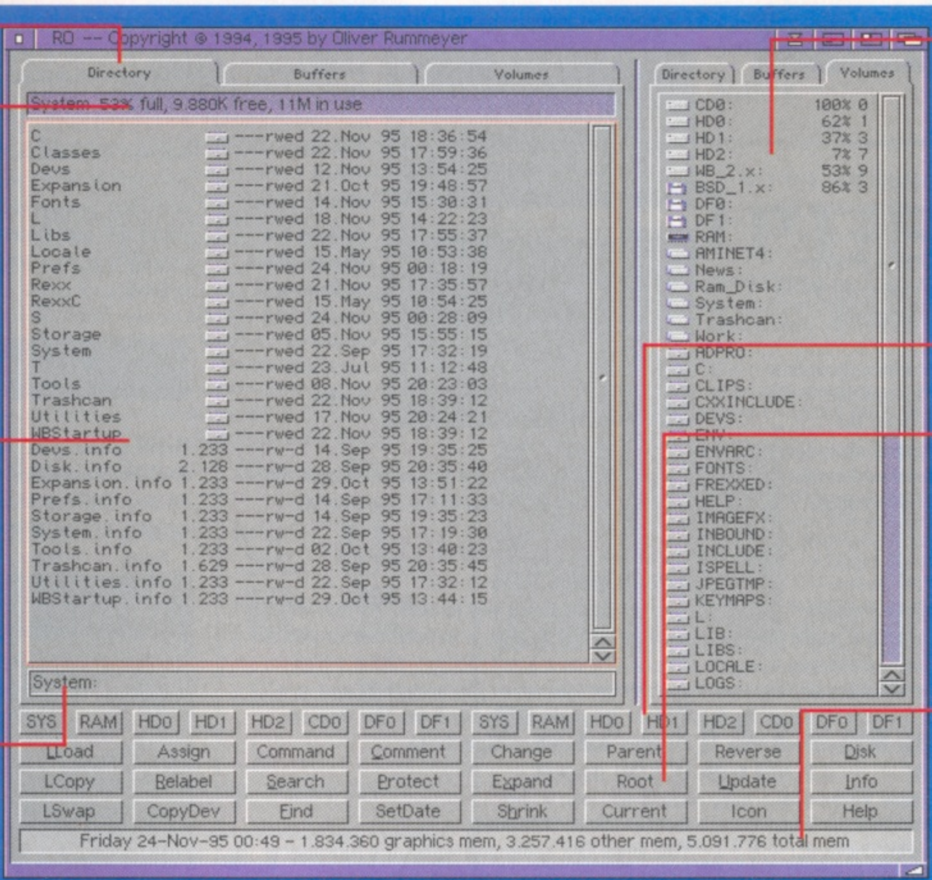
This new file manager is easy to use and has lots of options, but does require you to have MUI.

The three different Listview types are selected here.

This bar shows information on the current directory and indicates which is the active section – important because that denotes the source directory when copying files and also acts as a parent bar for moving up a directory.

The Listview section displays the actual files and directories. You can tell the types by its icon. Double clicking on directories moves into them, while double clicking on files acts on them – view a picture, archive contents, etc.

The Path gadget shows the current path, but can be altered manually if you want.



The second Listview section is identical in function to the first, although here it has been resized to make it smaller.

The strip of volumes allows quick access to a different drive.

The banks of buttons are here and you can move through the 50 internal ones or set up your own. Only 24 buttons are shown at once and you have to move through them to use the others.

The Status bar shows current system information, but by clicking on it will flip through the different banks of command buttons.

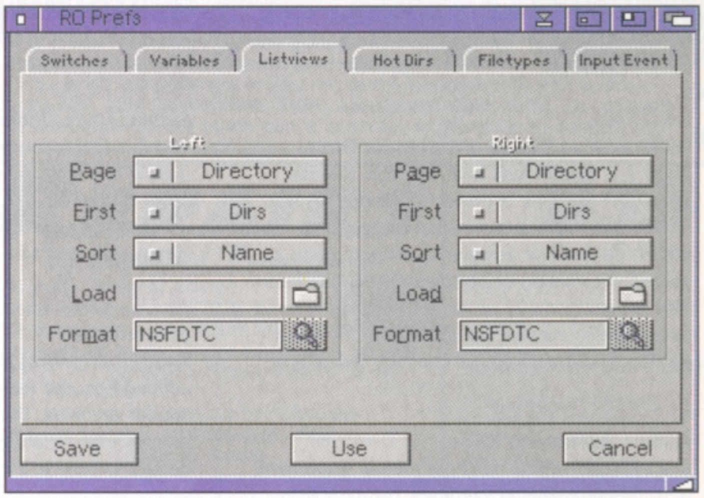
currently active, this is important because that's the source side. Clicking on the other sides changes active status, as does the "'" key. The active section is denoted by the blue highlighting in this text field. As an additional feature this text field also behaves as a parent bar and clicking in it once will move you one step back up the drive hierarchy to the parent directory.

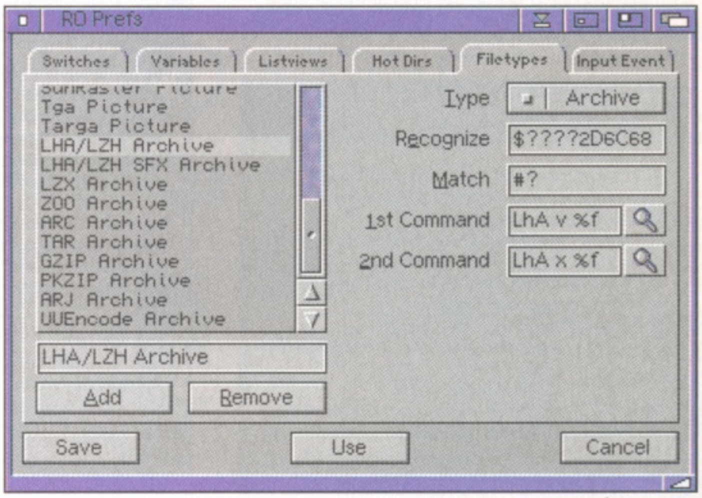
Underneath the Listview is a Path gadget which shows the current path. If you want to get to a directory quickly, you can edit the Path and then hit return. This saves moving through the directories manually with the mouse. There is also a bank of drive buttons which can list either 16 or 32 drives to allow you to get at them quickly instead of using the volumes listing.

The most important part is the bank of command buttons underneath this. There are 50 internal functions and you can configure your own additional ones up to the maximum of 120 commands. These commands are stored in banks which you can flip through by clicking on the Status bar at the bottom or by clicking the mid-mouse button over the bank (if you have a three button mouse). The Status bar at the bottom shows all sorts of information as well including date, time and memory usage.

Some filetypes can be actioned simply by double-clicking on them, such as viewing a picture or reading a text file or an AmigaGuide. You can play animations or music modules in this way too. It can even deal with CDXL files! Using the command buttons you can also do things like touch files, copy them, delete them, create new folders, archive, de-archive, add assigns and change file protection. It all works on multiple files too.

The preferences for RO are easy to set and can have startup drawers ready when you begin the program.





All the different filetypes can be recognised and different actions carried out, as specified in this part of the preferences.

Technical**Zone**

Taskbar 6

Author: Robert Ennals

This program is an enhancement of the Windows95 Taskbar idea. It adds a bar to the bottom of your Workbench which can do a variety of things. Firstly it acts as a program launcher with its own preferences program to allow you to easily set up the programs contained in the bar menu. Secondly it acts as a screen selector, in much the same way, with a menu of open screens in the bottom left. It also acts as a window selector, as does the Windows95 version, with windows shown along the bottom. There's a few other features but these can be found in the documentation.

MultiCX 2.57

Author: Martin Berndt

Yet another release of the popular multiple commodity program. There have been some bugfixes and feature extensions and there is a version for Workbench 2+ and Workbench 3+ users. For the few who've not experienced MultiCX yet, this is a commodity which adds lots of new features to Workbench.

It patches the system to allow for mouse acceleration, blanking, borders, drive clicking, space usage on windows, screen blanking, window cycling, window activation, format protection and much much more, but I think you get the idea. The details of all the features and how to set them in the tooltypes can be found in the AmigaGuide.

Xopa

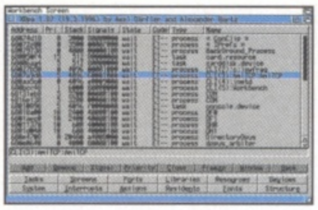
Authors: Axel Dörfler & Alexander Bartz

Xopa is a system task analyser. You can see what your machine is doing from many different angles and make adjustments, removing unwanted tasks or assigns, closing screens, getting information on libraries. The list goes on. This is a program for advanced users who need to be able to access the underlying operating system and should not be used by the novice.

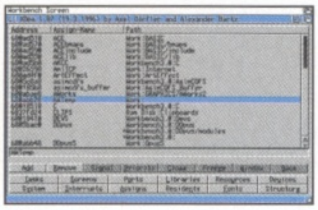
BigBrother

Author: Allenbrand Brice

A small utility which monitors mouse movement, activates and selects windows, disables drive clicking, closes all windows (which I find useful) and cycles through screens, amongst other things. All the options are enabled through the icon tooltypes, explained in the documents.



Xopa can recognise actual tasks being performed and allow you to access them.



Assigns are also handled by Xopa and can be added or removed easily.

Non Volatile Editor

Author: Steven Ross

This program allows you to scan the non-volatile memory of CD[32], copy it to hard disk or edit it. The CD[32] has a small memory cache which doesn't get lost when you switch off and in there it stores hi-scores and the like. You can use this editor to change these.

Kick 2 File

Author: Maik Schreiber

This small CLI command writes the Kickstart ROM to a file. You cannot distribute the Kickstart files, but you can then use them under an emulator on a different platform, so long as you don't use it at the same time as your Amiga.

SHTML

Author: Chris Underwood

This is a CLI command that can do two things quickly and with minimum overheads. It can show text HTML in a Shell window and it can convert it into standard text for you. It's very simple and easy to use.

Arc Dest

Author: Freak

If you've ever used an Aminet CD you will have noticed how the AmigaGuides can access and unpack archives. This command, freely redistributable can do the same. There are details on how to incorporate the command usage into an AmigaGuide, but it is more or less: @{"<button text>" System "Arcdest <archiver> <archive>"}.

Refresh WB

Author: Sebastian Weslowski

Sometimes when you reboot Workbench 3 the backdrop picture is not redrawn correctly. If you install this and insert the command before LoadWB in your startup-sequence then this bug is fixed.

Programming**Zone**

There is the code for this month's Blitz BASIC tutorial, which can be found on page 46 and there is also an executable version for you to play with. ■

Disk contributions

This month's disks were compiled using files from Aminet and with the help of the authors of the programs.

If you would like to contribute to a future disk, whether you have a full application, utility, 40K demo, clipart, font, 3D object, or even a module, send it to:

David Taylor,
Amiga Shopper Coverdisk Contributions,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, N. SomersetBA1 2BW.

Please only send the minimum distribution archive. Also, please do not powerpack (or similar) any files because it detracts from the archiving.

Dodgy disk?

To avoid errors when installing to floppies, ensure that your destination disks are of high quality. If an error occurs, try re-booting and using a different spare disk – the majority of errors are caused by faulty destination disks.

If your Coverdisk absolutely refuses to work and you are certain it is faulty, please return it, along with an S.A.E., to the address below. Please do not send faulty disks to the Amiga Shopper offices.

Amiga Shopper Coverdisk
(insert the name of the disk),
TIB plc, TIB House,
11 Edward Street,
Bradford
BD4 7BH.

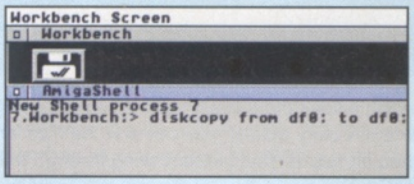
Beginners, look!



Before using this month's Coverdisk, please be sure to back it up – just in case. Simply follow the easy instructions below.



1 ***Boot up from your Workbench disk or partition, double-click on your Shell icon – to be found in your System Drawer.***



2 ***If you only have one disk drive, type in the following line and then press Return.***

```
Diskcopy from DF0: to DF0:
```

If you have two drives, place the Coverdisk in DF0: and a blank in DF1:, then type in this line instead:

```
Diskcopy from DF0: to DF1:
```

3 ***Follow the on-screen prompts and remember that the Coverdisk is the source disk and the blank is the destination.***

4 ***If you used the two-drive method, remember to rename the copy by clicking on its icon and pressing right-Amiga r.***

5 ***If you have two drives, you can also copy the disk from Workbench by dragging the Coverdisk icon over the destination disk's.***

6 ***Then place either of the Coverdisks in DF0: and reset the Amiga to boot it. It is best to boot disk 1 (or the Subs disk if you're a subscriber). This will let you install all the disks to either floppy or hard drive.***

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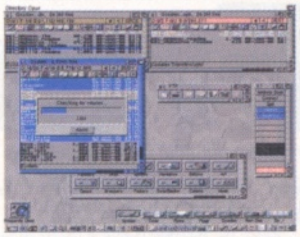
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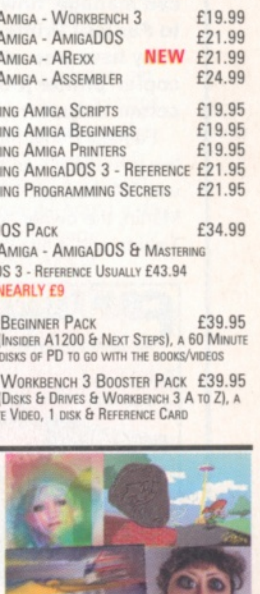
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News

No news is good news as far as VIScorp are concerned, Netcom plans to support the Amiga but days are numbered for your favourite Amiga mag...

Net Freebies

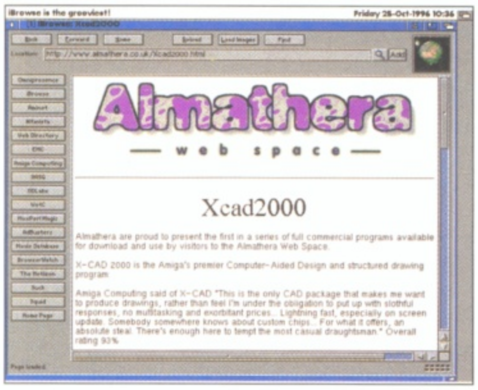
Almathera, the creators of such best-selling Amiga titles as Photogenics, Video Creator and the CDPD range of CD-ROM titles has come up with a new concept for wired Amiga owners.

You've had complete programs on magazine coverdisks before, you've even had complete programs on magazine cover CDs, but Almathera are the first company that we know of to put a complete and unadulterated commercial package on their web site for completely free download.

The program in question, X-CAD 2000, won't cost you a bean, other than your phone bill, and you certainly won't have to buy a magazine to get it.

The only criterion Almathera impose is that you fill out a simple form detailing not only your name and address, but also what sort of Amiga you are running and how you access the world wide web. Once this is all done, you are presented with a new menu with the two DMS files to download and that's just about all there is to it.

Almathera say that this is only the first of their net freebies so hurry along to http://www.almathera.co.uk/ for more information.



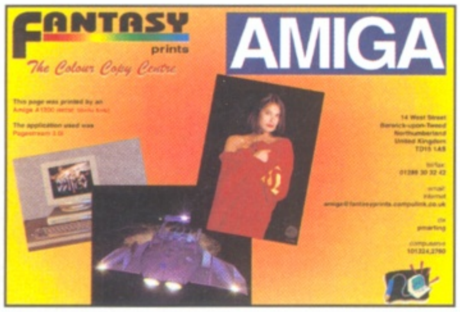
Almathera presents the first in a series of free programs for download.

Colour output fantasy

If you've bought the clipart selection from Artworks, then you want to be able to get the most out of it. If you want to output the images at a more colourful and higher resolution than you can manage, how about sending your work to Fantasy Prints in Berwick-upon-Tweed. They have one of those Canon colour copier/printer jobs that produces great full colour output from your files.

Fantasy Prints has been in business for over five years and was started on an Amiga 500 with Workbench 1.3 and PageStream 2.2. Paul Martin, the owner, started the business to print T-shirts and it has built up from there. Now they have more powerful Amigas connected to Canon colour copiers and a Fiery RIP for top notch colour output. At present, Fantasy support applications like PageStream 3, Final Writer, Wordworth, ProDraw and DPaint and can not only output your artwork onto paper up to A3 in size, but also for transfer onto jigsaws, polo and t-shirts, mugs, mouse mats and calendars.

Fantasy can also offer their scanning service to Amiga users and details of these and the other services they offer can be found on their web site at:
http://www.compulink.co.uk/~fantasyprints.
If you aren't wired yet, you can give Fantasy a call or fax on: 01289 303242.





Take advantage of the powerful machinery at Fantasy Prints to get the most out of your artwork.

Kara mia di Cloanto

Cloanto, the Italian software house behind long-term success story Personal Paint, have just released the Kara Collection. The name "Kara" should ring some bells with experienced Amiga owners, as the name of a set of animated and colour fonts, and it is indeed this same Kara that the collection refers to.

The Kara Collection CD consists of more than 360Mb of ColorFonts and AnimFonts, PlaqueGrounds, which are beveled backdrops for text in different shapes and styles, and StarFields – a collection of animated star backdrops complete with little additions such as comets and satellites to spruce them up a bit.

As well as providing the complete Kara Blohm output, the CD also contains an upgrade for Personal Paint so that it can now support animbrushes and a much easier way of stringing animfonts together than was previously available. Before, you had to manually place the animbrushes together on the page in a lengthy and laborious process, but now, Personal Paint offers you a text requester and then simply does all the hard work for you.

Just so that you get the most from the CD, Cloanto have also put over 30 minutes worth of tutorial animations on the disc, showing the user how to set up soft shadows, anti alias text and so on.

Finally, the Kara Collection will be available at a price of £34.95 and a new improved Personal Suite will also be made available at the same time for just £19.95.

More for less

Blittersoft have announced price reductions across a wide range of products. Good news is there for anyone thinking of giving their Amiga a speed boost with the cost of a 50MHz, 68060-powered CyberStorm II dropping from its original price of £699.95 to an all-time low of just £529.95. A1200 owners are in for just as much of a treat with prices for the top-rated Blizzard 1260 dropping from £599.95 to just £479.95 – a reduction of £120, enough to buy 16Mb of RAM.

It's not only accelerators that have been reduced in price. Fancy a new computer? Blittersoft's AT-licensed A4000TE's are all reduced in price with a full 060 version now costing less than £2000, while a tower case and 060 accelerator for your A1200 will set you back just under £1000.

Finally, as Haage and Partner's distributor in this country, Blittersoft have just announced that the highly-rated Art Effect program will be on sale at just £79.95. For more details contact Blittersoft on 01908 261 466, fax them on 01908 261 488, e-mail them at: bsoft@wildnet.co.uk



Art Effect would probably have got a better review rating if we had known it would only cost £79.95.

What's the big scoop?

VISCORP
VISUAL INFORMATION SERVICES CORPORATION

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS - WE HOPE.

The internet TV company that looked so promising back in April at the World of Amiga show is still dragging its heels when it comes to the purchase of the Amiga. Although the extended deadline of 20th September has long since been passed, and the rumoured deadline of 15th October has also been and gone, we have had no news from Jason Compton, VIScorp's Amiga PR guy, or anyone else.

According to insider information we recently received, Bill Buck is still over in Germany frantically negotiating the deal, so it looks as though the German administrators for the Vergleich action are still amenable to VIScorp's offer. As soon as we hear more, you'll be the first to know.

Power up for less

Always innovators, Power Computing have recently introduced the cheapest accelerators we at Amiga Shopper have ever seen. A 25MHz 68030 board with 25MHz FPU, battery backed clock and 4Mb of RAM costs just £99.95. Yes, that does include the memory. If you are a real speed demon, Power also have 33MHz and 50MHz versions available, but for more details you'll need to call Power themselves on 01234 273000.

Answers not questions

That is what Lee Gibson promises. Lee, who used to own now defunct Optonica has recently set up business to provide solutions for people in vertical markets looking for specific applications that the Amiga is ideally suited for.

People muttering that it was VIScorp's fault that Optonica went out of business will be in for a shock though, "I have nothing but good things to say about our business with VIScorp," said Lee. "The cause of Optonica's downfall was actually due to one of our major customers, a video wall company, declaring themselves insolvent." We wish Lee all the best in his new venture and look forward to the things he's promised to tell us when the time is right. If you wish to contact ANQ Ltd call 01455 559446.

Amiga Shopper dead? Definitely not...

The rumours of our death have been slightly exaggerated. Last month's Amiga News – a French publication – stated in its news section that Future Publishing had ceased publication of Amiga Shopper, the world's best serious Amiga mag.

Thus started the rumour spread like wildfire over the Internet and filtered back to us because of hundreds of worried readers ringing up and asking whether or not they would be able to buy Amiga Shopper ever again.

Well, we can tell you that yes, you can still buy Amiga Shopper. It is still available but unfortunately not for much longer. Next month – – Issue 71 – will be the final opportunity that you get to buy your favourite magazine. Don't miss out!

Net news flash!

Netcom, the world's largest independent Internet service provider has, in a shock move, decided to support Amiga users.

Even though the Amiga is the fourth most popular platform for surfing the net, few ISPs want anything to do with our favourite machine.

But Netcom have decided to offer a full Amiga package called NETCOMplete based around the AmiTCP v4 demo and a variety of MUI-based internet applications such as AmFTP, AmIRC and Voyager.

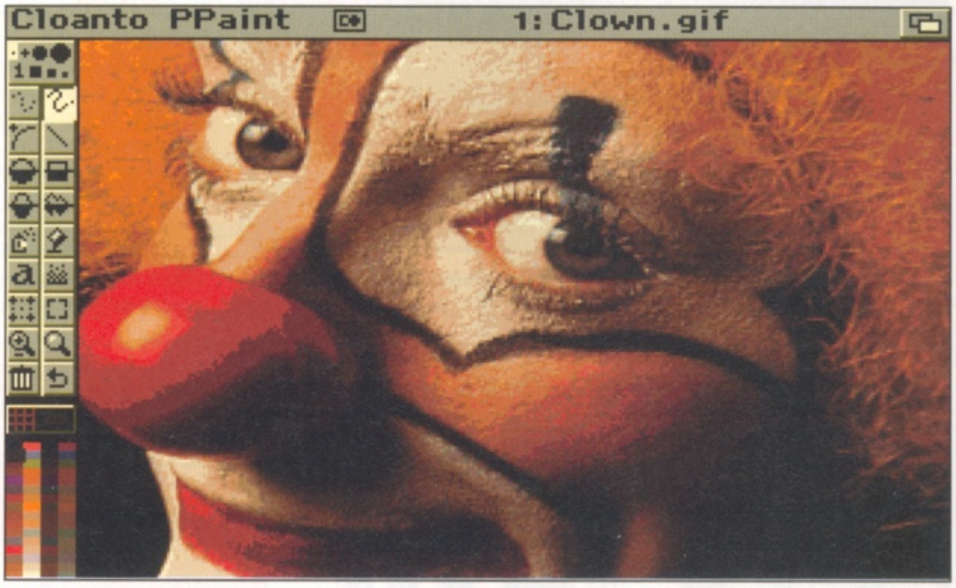
The four disk installation set creates a drawer, and all assigns are simply and painlessly made. Support, if needed, is available both through Netcom's support line which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or through Eyetech, Netcom's Amiga distributor on 01642 713185.

Full documentation is included for the individual packages in the installation set as well as a general guide to using the software provided with Netcom.

Netcom charge £5.95 for the first month's access and £14.95 per month thereafter (including VAT) and you can contact them on 01344 395500 for further details.

Mission: Impossible?

The PC now has a stable emulator for running Amiga software. **David Taylor** *finds out what it's all about and speaks to the man who achieved the impossible.*



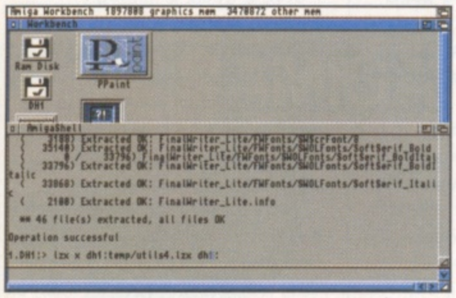
PPaint loaded and worked fine. Although it took some time to load, it actually worked quite quickly.

It was always the one thing Amiga owners had to grasp on to: if your PC is so great, how come the Amiga can emulate the PC but not the other way around? Well, that has gone out of the window with the development of a PC emulator which can deal with the idiosyncrasies of the Amiga. The system, created by Bernd Schmidt, a 22 year old computer science student, is currently non-AGA only and requires a hefty set-up to run. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable achievement considering everyone said it wasn't feasible. We've got our hands dirty trying out the software and even spoken to the author himself, to find out what motivated him and what he thinks about the future of the Amiga.

Useless or ultimate?

When UAE was first released six months ago we featured a news item on it and remarked on how sluggish it was. At the time UAE stood for Useless Amiga Emulator – and that was pretty much the case. However, now in version 0.6, the name has been changed to Unix Amiga Emulator. Now it is stable, useable and, well, it's been developed primarily for Unix.

There are plenty of different versions around and it has been ported to a MS-DOS version (the one we used), the Mac and even the Amiga! There are differences between the versions. You will need to compile your own version of the original Unix and, of course, have Unix set up on your system. The MS-DOS version, by comparison, is very easy to get up and running, although estimated to be around 20% slower.

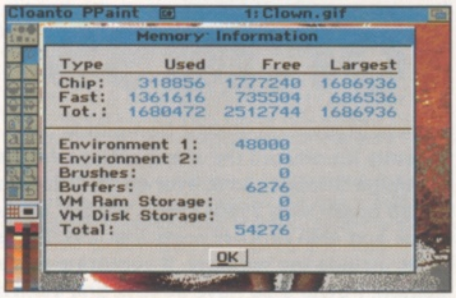


Workbench up and running, unpacking an lzx archive with some software in it, under the DOS version of UAE.

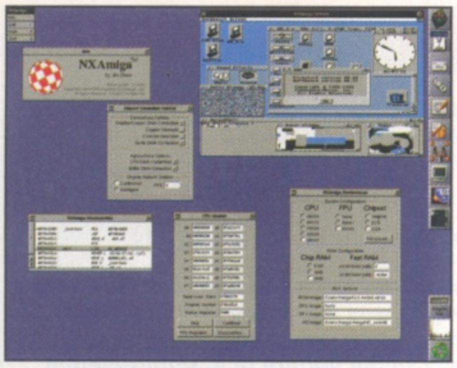
UAE emulates an A500 with up to 2Mb chip RAM. In order for the program to work it requires a Kickstart ROM image. This is done easily using a CLI command which works on the Amiga and writes the ROM image to a file. You can use the ROM from any version of the Amiga, which is why an Amiga version isn't so stupid – you can emulate a 1.3 machine on an A1200. The Kickstart ROM image needs to be copied to the same directory as the program. Now all you have to do is start the emulator and, hey presto, the Amiga boot screen appears.

I have to admit that I was dubious at this point. It had been too easy to get started. The next step was to actually get some software over to it. The PC cannot read Amiga floppy disks and nothing is going to change that fact. To get around this, there is another command which reads the tracks from a floppy and writes out a disk image. You can then transfer the image to the PC and it can use these. Transferring the ROM image isn't a problem, because you can just use CrossDOS and a normal PC disk. However, the slight problem is that a disk image is over 900000 bytes which is too large for the 712K capacity of a DD PC disk. There are several ways of dealing with this. The first is to use a high density drive on the Amiga and just use a 1.44Mb floppy. This is by far the best way to it, but if you don't have an HD drive, then you can try zipping up the disk image and then fitting it onto a DD disk. In most cases this should work. If it doesn't, then split the file on the Amiga and rejoin it on the PC – there are several PD packages that can do this.

If this all sounds a bit much, you could just get a null modem cable to transfer files or even



PPaint was unusual in that despite having the memory for the Amiga set to 8Mb, it knew that the machine had 16Mb.



People are even prepared to fake Amiga emulators like this elaborate hoax. UAE, however, is genuine.

use the Amiga2PC package that was included on the AS disks a few months ago.

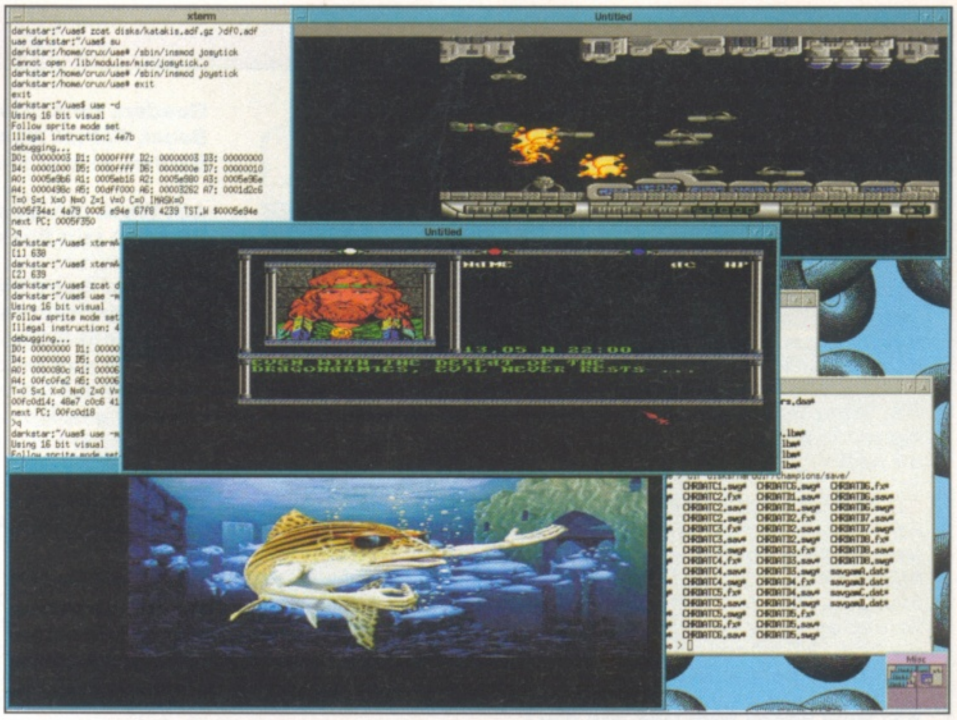
Booting up

Once the Workbench disk had been copied across as an image, it was time to try it out. When you start the DOS interface there are a couple of options which are worth changing. The first is the aspect correction in the Video settings. Without out it turned on, you will get a screen at half the correct height. You can also change the amount of chip and fast RAM available. It supports up to 2Mb chip and 11.8Mb fast, although I only had 8Mb as a maximum. You can then select which disk is in "df0:". Alternatively you can start the emulator and then insert and remove "disks" from "df0:"-"df3:" using key combinations. The diskfiles are just selected from a DOS menu.

When all this is done, you can hit <return> and let it boot. Sure enough up pops the AmigaDOS screen followed by Workbench. Now is the time to talk about speed and program requirements. Theoretically the program works on a 386 with VGA and mouse, but it would be too slow. You really need a Pentium 100+ (which is today's entry level) and a VGA card with VESA BIOS.

If you have a slow machine, then you can try to get better performance by adjusting the frame rate so that it doesn't refresh every time. On a Pentium 120, the program took about half the time of an A500 to boot using every frame. I now had a perfect floppy based Amiga on my PC.

The next step is to get a hard drive working. You should be able to attach an Amiga hard

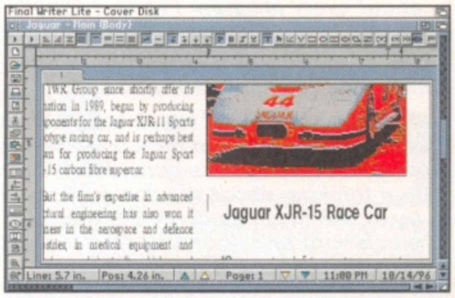


Running under Unix is faster and can run in the Unix Windows. Pretty impressive stuff.

drive and you certainly can in the Unix version. But easier by far is to set up a hard disk file. Like ShapeShifter, the Amiga's Mac emulator, you can simulate a hard drive by using a large file on your hard drive. This is created using an MS-DOS command. Now when you start the emulator you get the choice to activate the hard disk file.

You then boot the Amiga from "floppy" again, as you would with a real Amiga, and format the hard disk file which appears as a non-DOS disk. Of course, you can use HDToolbox to partition the file if you want. With this sorted, all you need to do is copy across the Install disks for Workbench and get all the software onto the hard drive. In fact you do exactly the same as you would with an Amiga when setting up a hard drive except that everything has to be done using the floppy disk images.

When the hard drive file is ready, the -m switch in DOS allows you to select a name and mount an MS-DOS directory under that name as a second volume. You cannot use that directory as the main drive, but it does mount for any extra storage and for copying files from the



Final Writer Lite from the Amiga Format Coverdisk worked fine, but reminded me why an A500 is not acceptable for modern computing.

Amiga or from the Internet quicker.

One strange thing was that when copying one floppy image across, I got an error copying the image from the PC. When I tried to use it in UAE, it worked fine, except it had a checksum error on one block, which was an unusual sight on a PC! When the basic hard drive was set up, it could be booted back up from hard drive and that turned out to be much faster than the floppy emulation. If you have any disk files named df0.adf, the emulator will always take it as being in the floppy drive (unless you eject it), but it means that it will always boot that disk.

What's the catch?

OK, so everything seems to be going pretty well. I created some lzx archives with some software on it, copied it to floppy with lzx and then created a disk image file, took them to the PC and started to unpack them. This all worked very well and meant within a few hours I had a fairly competent PC Amiga. I had DOpus 4, PPaint, a text editor, and some other utilities passed across. The only slight bind was that I couldn't get warm resets to work (the Amiga keys are mapped to the Windows keys, but it didn't seem to work). This meant quitting the emulator and restarting every time I adjusted the

▶ 14

Online resources

The main Uae page is at:
http://www-users.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/~crux/uae.html

The DOS version page is at
http://tinos.br/~ggoedert/dosuae.htm

A comparison of the Amiga and Uae can be found at
http://www.servtech.com/public/hanway/uae-tests.html

Help on setting up Uae can be found at
http:// www.servtech.com/public/hanway/uae-setup.html

and on the DOS version at
http://www.son.wisc.edu/~paul/uae/uaedos1.html

In the author's own words...

Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, we managed to get in touch with the author of UAE and speak to him about his work.

AS: How long did you own an Amiga and do you still have one?

BS: *I bought my A500 in 1989. It was one of the first Amigas with Kickstart 1.3. and I still have that one, but it has a few nice add-ons now, like a 120Mb hard disk (which cost more than a 3Gb hard disk today and 3Mb RAM.*

AS: What lead you to develop UAE, especially after everyone said it was impossible to emulate an Amiga on a PC?

BS: *The fact that everyone said it was impossible! I had written some programs back in my Amiga days, and there were a couple of games, demos and sound modules for the Amiga which it would have been a shame to lose when changing to a different system. So I pretty much planned on writing an Amiga emulator some day even when I bought my first 386. Of course, that machine wasn't really suitable, so I had to postpone things a bit.*

AS: How happy with UAE are you?

BS: *Very happy. It's my best program so far, but I think that about every program I write. I usually don't think so after a couple of months, so UAE is an exception.*

AS: How long has it taken you?

BS: *The basic thing which would show you a black-and-white Kickstart hand took less than two weeks to write. Of course, I had spent a considerable amount of time before that thinking about the design (and giving up on plans to try to use features of the PC graphics card for video emulation) and decoding all the 68000 instructions by hand with an assembler and a debugger.*

AS: How difficult was it to get UAE working?

BS: *As I said: Two weeks for the rough thing, but that one couldn't boot and only had black and white graphics, but it worked (sort of).*

AS: How stable do you think the latest version is?

BS: *Pretty much so, I think. There are a few odd bug reports which are currently puzzling me, but application programs should have few to no problems, and games usually work, too, if they aren't copy-protected.*

AS: When do you think you will you get to version 1?

BS: *I don't really know. AGA support would be a nice thing to have for something that would be called version 1, but I never had an AGA machine, and I don't have much AGA-capable software. Still, it would be nice to have. And it should probably have sprite collisions by then. That's not hard, but it's annoying to code.*

AS: Who else has helped you?

BS: *Lots of people all over the Internet. Making the source available was maybe the best decision concerning UAE. Here's a list from the CREDITS file for 0.6.4 (which is incomplete by now, but I don't have the new one): Alessandro Bissacco, Hannu Rummukainen, Ed Hanway, Denis Sablic, Marcus Sundberg, Samuel Devulder, Stefan Reinauer, Marco Nelissen, Thierry Lescot, Bruno Coste, Oliver Moehrke, Per Olofssen, Tristan Cavelier, Olivier Raoul, Markus Gietzen, Christian Schmitt, Herman ten Brugge, Tauno Taipaleenmaki, Samuel Mackrill, Dirk Vangestel, Thorsten Frueauf, Ernesto Corvi, Gustavo Goedert, Peter Remmers, Tim Gunn, Nemo Pohle, Christian Bauer, Patrick Hanevold, Ian Stephenson, Olaf 'Olsen' Barthel, Krister Bergman, Manfred Thole.*

AS: Wow, obviously it has turned into quite a project. What do you think makes the Amiga so intriguing?

BS: *What made the Amiga special in its glory days was of course the hardware, which was extremely well-designed, and the operating system, which was tailored toward that hardware and used every single feature of it. Unfortunately, both of these have turned into major disadvantages – bitplane graphics are no longer a good way to handle things for hi-colour modes, the blitter is too slow these days and the AGA chipset no longer deserves the term "well-designed".*

The operating system used every feature of the original hardware with the 68000 CPU, but newer systems have MMUs which support paging, virtual memory, memory protection: nice things the Amiga OS can't really have without being changed into something completely different. Still, I would say the Amiga was the best-designed computer system that I ever saw. When I say that, I'm talking about the original models – A500, A1000, A2000. At that time, there was nothing that could compare to these, and today's computer systems don't even try to have a good design. They no longer have to.

AS: How many people use UAE do you think?

BS: *It's hard to tell. My Web page gets about 500 hits a day.*

AS: Do you think the Amiga has a future, or is it going to go the way of the C64 and become for nostalgia buffs only? Will it only live on in these types of emulators?

BS: *I don't know. They have to get rid of the old hardware, or everyone will laugh at them. They need to change the OS completely so it can compete with today's technology – even Win95 is ahead of the AmigaOS in some points, which is rather sad.*

What I would call a "new Amiga", and would even consider buying, is a PPC machine with a good PCI board, with no special chipsets (maybe a good audio card. Soundblasters suck), SCSI, running some kind of Unix (Linux would be my first choice here – I like free software), and having the AmigaOS as a user-mode shared library running under Linux. It could include some form of 68K emulation in user-mode.

A user who doesn't want to use Unix would never see it: the Workbench could be started at boot-time and take over completely. The AmigaOS would be the user-interface, just like X11. You could call such a system technically superior to others in several ways, and that's why I'd call it an Amiga. Of course, the price should be reasonable, and a lot different from what they asked for A1200s and A4000s in the last year or so. I don't think it's going to happen, though. And there would still be the question: who would develop software for it?

AS: Has anyone from Amiga Technologies or Viscorp contacted you about UAE?

BS: *No*

AS: Well, thank you very much for finding the time to answer our questions. The UAE project is obviously going to continue to develop for some time yet, so good luck. At least, if everything goes wrong for the Amiga, you will in some way have guaranteed its memory will live on.



X-DVE installed and rendered a sample project fine. Although slow, it was faster than on a standard A500. Still, that was on a Pentium 120.

startup-sequence (for assigns for DOpus, etc). This means the UAE settings are not saved automatically.

Problems problems

When it came to installing DOpus 5 I hit a snag. Installer seemed to hang the whole emulation every time and I had to quit UAE. Using the software I'd installed wasn't a problem though and it all worked fine. It was very slow when writing files to hard drive and I found it quicker to generate files to RAM (because I could easily get 10Mb RAM up) and copy them to hard drive, but that would be true on a real Amiga. The speed of programs did turn out to be about twice the speed of an A500, which isn't bad, but seems slows in comparison to an accelerated A1200.

Although UAE works amazingly well, considering the difficulty with the task, it isn't quite as complete an emulator as say ShapeShifter. The mouse is emulated and you can use your PC mouse. There is joystick compatibility or emulation through the keyboard. The Amiga keys are emulated and this works with some combinations (right Amiga-M for example) but not the reset. I couldn't get the serial port to work, although there is mention of serial port emulation. However, given the PC outperforms the Amiga for WWW capabilities, it's better to use that.

So why bother?

Although it is possible to work using the floppy based system or a hard disk file and copying everything manually, it's hard to see why you'd bother. However, if you are using the switch which allows the Amiga to access files on your PC drive, you reach the point where, once set up, you can pack away your Amiga, download

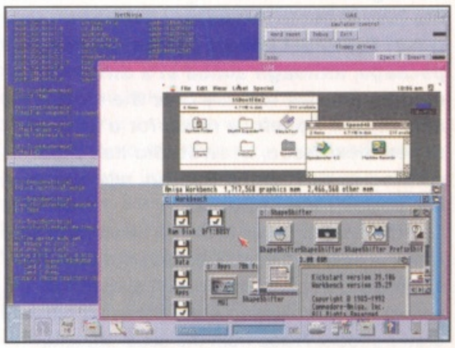


UAE can use any ROM image and so you can have a 1.3 machine, a 2.0 machine or a 3.0 machine depending on which Amiga you take your ROM from.

files on your PC for your Amiga and unpack them. It means that if you've bought a PC, you don't have to lose touch with the Amiga scene.

There is a PC utility to read disk image files back out to files so you can get files from floppy images onto your PC. This is a way of getting them onto your "Amiga" using the MS-DOS partition switch, or to your PC from the emulator by copying them onto a "floppy" and then taking them off again in MS-DOS. However, this read disk utility only works with OFS disks (and you can forget trying to use non-standard disks like commercial games with non-DOS disks or floppy expansion systems like Diskspare which allow more than the FFS filesystem).

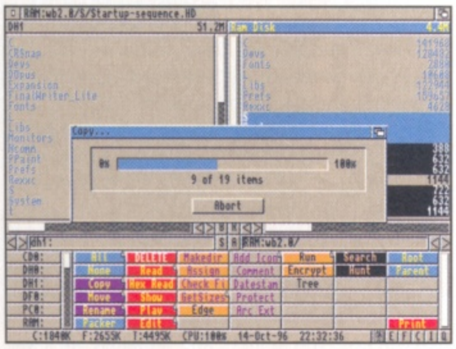
When you get right down to it, UAE is amazing. It needs some effort to learn about the more complicated features, but you can have the emulator up and running quickly and have an optimal system working within a few hours. I suppose the best thing would be to have a hard disk file with just the system software on it and then a directory accessible on the PC drive. It reads the MS-DOS directory faster than a real Amiga and if you've only got an A500, UAE will



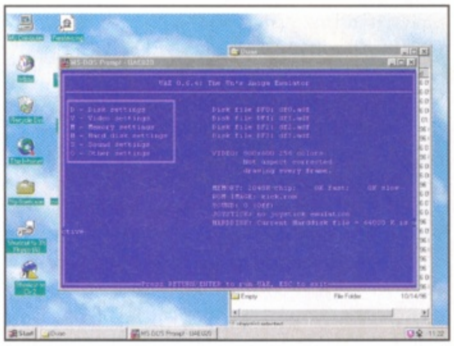
This is perhaps the most amazing shot of UAE, from a WWW page. It shows UAE running ShapeShifter, the Mac emulator.

completely outperform it.

UAE needs some tweaking and there are a few bugs that still need fixing. AGA support would be a great improvement and the documents could be made more readable. But as an emulator that costs you absolutely nothing you couldn't really ask for more. As I said before UAE really is quite amazing. ■



UAE adequately runs programs like DOpus. It's useful to set it up first because it makes copying other programs across much easier.



UAE is not designed to run under windows95 – the author hates programming for it. You can run it under a DOS box, but it may be unstable.



UAE is proving so popular people are adding screenshots to their WWW pages showing it off – the mark of a very popular PD package.

Draw Studio

Preview

David Taylor *gets a sneak preview of the new drawing package that offers features never before seen on the Amiga.*

With few of the major software developers prepared to brave the chilly waters of the Amiga market, you might be forgiven for assuming that we'd seen the last of quality releases. But hot on the tail of Art Effect comes another graphics package, although aimed at a different market. Due for release over the next month, and hopefully ready for a full review next issue, DrawStudio has been created by the brothers Dean, who wrote the popular ImageStudio.

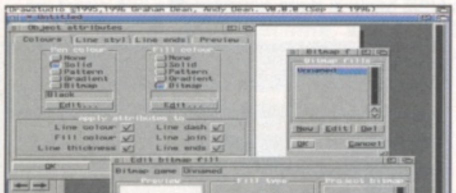
The program uses MUI and has an interface which is easy to use and looks very much like a simplified DTP package. The left side of the screen has a toolbar containing a set of different drawing tools. Aside from the usual straight, curved line and square drawing tools, there are some more advanced features, which have been poached from programs like Quark Express. There's thickness of lines, type of line (dotted, full, etc) and line ending types (arrows, dots). You can choose the line and fill colour.



The program has text effects and layers as well as objects. This is a real advance for Amiga packages.

What is it?

What is difficult to say is the type of program that DrawStudio is. On the surface it appears to be a structured drawing package, allowing you to draw pictures and design 2D diagrams. Each time you draw something, it remains as a separate object, composed of a set of points at corners. Because the pictures are made up of objects, you can go back to any object at any time and adjust it, making the picture very flexible. This idea has been used for quite a while on PC programs, but is new to the Amiga.



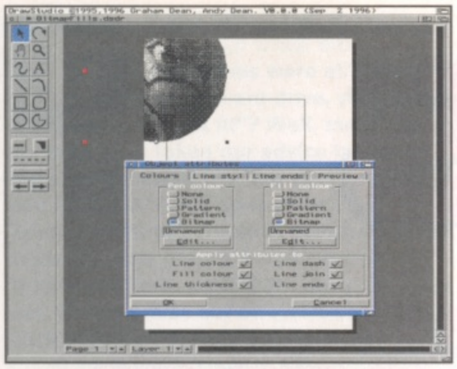
When using advanced features like bitmap fill you do have to work your way through quite a few sub requesters.

DrawStudio goes a stage further though, and also allows you to add layers to your pictures. You can place different objects on different layers and decide which layers are showing at any time. This makes a picture very flexible; not only can you place lines and boxes, pictures and text anywhere on the page, but you can then come back to them and move them at any time, leave one layer set when you're happy with it and add elements on top of these on a separate layer.

DrawStudio seems to be straying into the area of DTP, but not so far that it can be considered a full DTP solution – for a start there is no ASCII import feature.

One of the most impressive features is the bitmap fills which you can apply to objects. You can select a circle and draw it to the correct size, then you just select the attributes for the object and choose what type of fill you want for the object and the pen. Thus you can select that the border of the circle is filled with a gradient or pattern and the fill of the circle with a different method. As I said, you can choose a bitmap picture to fill this – different file formats are supported. You now have a circle filled with a picture to be placed anywhere. It's a shame that you cannot adjust the scaling of the bitmap within the object and move it around to select an area of the bitmap. As it is the bitmap is just centralised, but this suggestion has been passed onto the authors and hopefully we'll see the feature implemented in the final release.

Another hot feature is the transparent colour method. Like the bitmap fill, you simply select



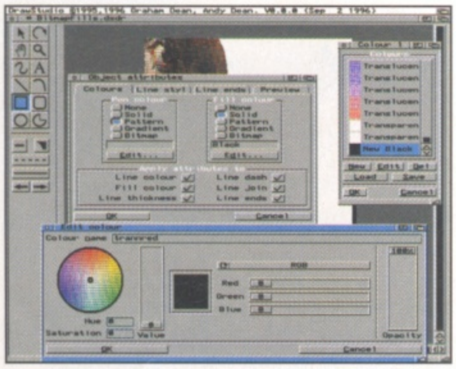
The object attributes contain many different sub options. It's all point and click, but that does mean that all the information isn't contained on the top requester.

the object attributes and then choose solid. From there you can create a new colour and then edit it, to rename and choose the opacity (very Quark Xpress). Now when that filled object is placed over another object you will see the object below to the degree dictated in the opacity you set. To be able to see these effects you need to make sure the display is set to 24-bit. However, there isn't the chance to do the same with bitmap fills which is a shame. Although that would be a very advanced feature to implement, Art Effect does do it by allowing the opacity of any brush to be set, and it would add another really impressive feature.

As well as special text effects (not yet implemented), there are also some image manipulation effects. You can warp an object using presets which are adjustable to get a very different look and it works with bitmap filled objects so that a circle with a picture in it can be warped out to a different shape altogether.

Structured tools

All of the features so far mark out the program as a capable single page design, picture layout/image manipulation package. However, its main area is structured drawing – a method designed to make it easy for anyone to draw pictures. The drawing tools are supposed to make it possible for even the inept to produce quality images and of course the object/layer feature is what makes it very easy to perfect a project without having to wipe out an area and start again.



The transparent colour fill for objects is useful but it would be even better if it could also be applied to bitmaps.



The example projects show off fills and patterns, and the fill types for even the border lines of objects.

A bezier curve tool helps you to draw smooth continuous curved lines. With the tool selected, you just start a line and hold down the mouse button as you drag out the correct length. Then when you release the button you can curve the line and then click to set the point and continue to the next point in the same way. Double clicking ends the line. If you want to change the line later you can edit the bezier points from the menu so like the other objects, it remains very flexible.

Although there is a text tool, it wouldn't function properly in this beta preview and the blurb did say that text wrap wasn't supported which is bit of an omission. Nor were any of the promised text effects implemented yet, but we're told they are going to be special.

The price is right?

There are many other features in this program – Adobe Type 1 font support and a snap to grid ability (Quark again), but we'll give you more details when the review copy is ready (hopefully for the next issue). One problem, which I hope will be rectified, is that the program grabs a huge chunk of memory at startup, instead of functioning dynamically. So if you try a project with too many effects, with other applications running, you have to close and restart.



Even the likes of this cartoon character can be created with a set of separate objects, which can be moved about separately.

The cost for DrawStudio has been set at £59.95 for the floppy version and £74.95 for the CD version. This comes out at about the same price as most serious packages of this type, but is bound to be considered expensive by some users. As we've said before though, it is not reasonable to expect software developers to work for no reward. While many have already moved to PCs, where they will get a smaller market share but are able to charge more, the remaining few are still charging sub £100 prices. This month we've seen more and more press releases from smaller companies starting up, here and abroad, with Amiga products. IDE interfaces from France and finance packages from abroad as well as this DrawStudio.

Home Grown

This change is not necessarily bad. The bedroom programmer who now sees a chance to market his masterpiece may have been sat on a real gem which has never seen the light of day. OK, so it does also mean that some real dross may be foisted on us, but that's why we're here – to tell you what is a genuinely good piece of software. After all, a lot of the very best modern programs came from initial packages written by amateurs and snatched up by companies – look at Photogenics or the game Worms, for two recent examples. However, unless they recoup for hundreds of hours of their work, even these will disappear.

The move by the Dean brothers from Shareware creations to commercial releases may seem a big jump, but if the product is worth the money, then it will work out fine. It will then be down to users to decide whether any further Amiga releases will be seen, because nobody will release software for a platform without a market. ■

DrawStudio

Price:	£59.95 DD £79.95 CD
Supplier:	LH Publishing
Contact:	01908 370230

Verdict: N/A

Wheels of fire



CD-ROM is probably the fastest expanding sector of the Amiga market but there are so many choices. **Ben Vost** *guides you gently through.*



Do you remember about five years ago when the magazines were all saying "buy a hard drive, you'll never regret it!"? Well, most of you seem to have taken our advice because the surveys reveal that the vast majority of you (about 87%) do have an average of about 340Mb of hard drive space these days. But now there's a new aspiration. Unless you have a CD-ROM drive, reviews say, you will miss out on all this gorgeous stuff. And they're right you know.

At the moment. the best thing about the CD-ROM market is that most PCs come shipped with them. Why is this good? Well, mainly because whatever becomes popular on the PC becomes cheap. And cheap is good for all computer owners whether they are lucky enough to own an Amiga or not. This mass market has also driven the spec of your average CD-ROM drive up. Where once you were considered dangerously avant garde and extravagant if you had a double speed drive, now your friends may well sneer at you as they swiftly pass you by in the eight speed lane.

Of course, this mass market hasn't affected all CD-ROMs equally. If you are an Amiga owner of long standing, or with high requirements, then you will almost certainly have a SCSI CD-ROM drive rather than the cheaper IDE versions. This disparity in pricing is becoming less obvious as more PC's come equipped with SCSI cards as standard. But you can still expect to pay a premium for a SCSI kit and you'll just have to content yourself with the status that SCSI gives you over the cheap tawdriness of IDE peripherals.

Unfortunately, that status has become slightly tarnished in recent months as IDE devices start to outperform their theoretically better-specced SCSI cousins. Ok, it's true that you can only have a maximum of two/four IDE drives on a single controller, and they are not all as compatible with each other as most would like, but dammit, they do work and they are cheaper. Does this mean that Commodore was right to introduce the oh-so slightly cheaper IDE chip in replacement of a SCSI controller in the A600 and A1200? Not in this journalist's opinion. And especially not with the way they did it, calling the driver 'SCSI.device' and confusing everyone!

One thing you will almost certainly have noticed in recent months, if you watch the ads in Amiga magazines, is a sprouting of cheap CD-ROM drives that don't use the PCMCIA port of your A1200. These drives, which are also known as ATAPI devices – ATAPI only stands for AT (as in IBM AT) API (Application Program Interface), sit on your internal IDE port by means of a ribbon cable coming out between the top and bottom halves of your machine's case, but they are pretty easy to fit and certainly no slouches when it comes to transfer rates.

What it finally comes down to is the fact that no matter what kind of CD-ROM drive you choose – SCSI, ATAPI, double speed, ten speed or otherwise, there has never been a better time to do so. About half of you already have CD-ROMs of one sort or another and if we can raise that to the same kind of penetration as

▶ 20

MovieROMa

Now if you have an ATAPI CD-ROM drive, you may as well skip over this little boxout, but if you are one of the SCSI mob then you might be interested in HiSoft's SMD 100, otherwise known as the Squirrel MPEG. This little black box doesn't even need to be attached to your Amiga, it has a remote control, but it does need a SCSI CD-ROM drive.

So what is it and what does it do? The SMD 100 is a black box version of the FMV version of the CD32. It's a pretty featureless black box about six inches wide with a 50-way SCSI port on its back side. It also has a SCART socket and a mysterious nine-pin port. This means you can connect a genlock if you want to overlay graphics on top of the SMD 100's beautifully clean video signal.

Another advantage with having VideoCDs instead of VHS tapes is their indexing feature. Rather than having to search through a tape on visual fast forward until you get to the point that you want, VideoCD's are divided into what are called chapters. The sleeve for the VideoCD includes details what all those chapters are and they also come with a descriptive title.

You can instantly jump to a particular chapter merely by pressing the appropriate number on the keypad of the remote. Of course, it may be that the moment you are searching for cannot simply be found by going to a chapter's start. This is why the remote control is also furnished with fast forward and rewind buttons.

While the range of VideoCDs isn't quite as high as VHS, the selection's getting better all the time.



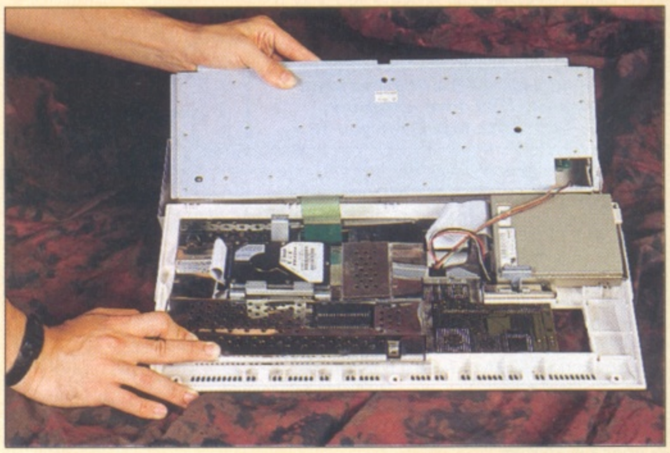




Fitting an ATAPI CD-ROM drive to your A1200

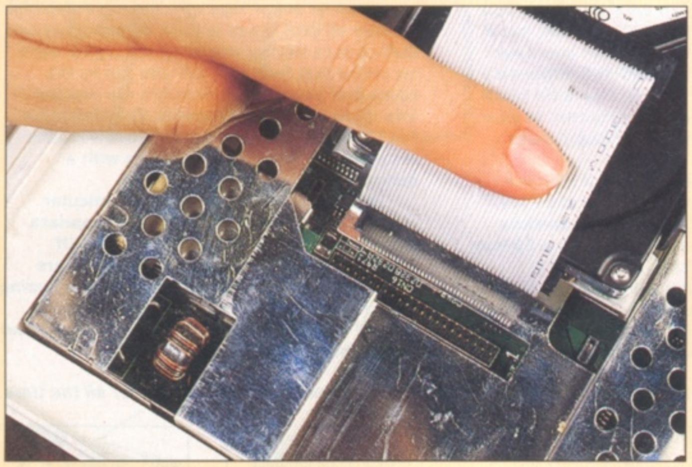


***FIRST STEPS:** If you have any warranty left on your A1200, you might want to let an authorised dealer do the following to fit your CD-ROM drive. Otherwise, simply remove the three screws at the front of the machine and the two at the sides, and carefully lift the lid. It should kind of hinge at the back as you lift it up. Be careful of the wire shown on the right-hand side of the picture, it connects the drive and power lights to the motherboard and you don't want to pull them out.*

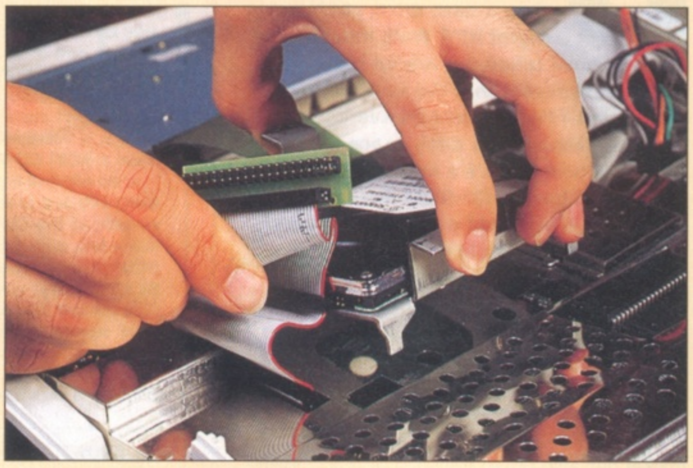


***NEXT BIT:** After you have laid the top of the case on its back behind the machine, you need to move the keyboard out of the way. This bit of your machine isn't anchored in any way other than being pushed under a set of tabs at the front of your A1200, so you should have no problems sliding it slightly back and then lifting it out of the way. Watch out for the drive light wires again, and, more importantly, the green keyboard connector shown just left of the centre of this picture.*

Fitting an ATAPI CD-ROM drive to your A1200



***REMOVING THE HARD DRIVE:** Now's where it starts getting really tricky, well, not really. Note the little "1" on the motherboard, and the fact that the coloured part of the cable connecting your hard drive to the motherboard is on the same side as the "1". From now on, you must maintain that coloured stripe on the same side of the cable at all times, otherwise you could cause your machine serious problems.*



***AND PUTTING IT BACK IN:** We've removed the cable that connected our hard drive and replaced it with the one that is supplied with the CD-ROM drive. We've plugged it into the motherboard (note the alignment of the red stripe), plugged it into the hard drive and we have the small circuit board plugged into the final connector. We can now replace the hard drive back in its proper position in the machine.*

hard drives then perhaps those CD-ROM titles we see on other platforms might be more of a reality on our machine too.

Gasteiner/Golden Image 8 Speed drive

Both these companies are offering similar deals. The deal comprises an externally cased eight speed, ATAPI CD-ROM drive, software drivers and either an internal or external adaptor. The external adaptor plugs into the PCMCIA port, and so it might not be too popular with Squirrel or VideoMaster owners, but that's OK since the internal version is pretty easy to fit anyway.

In either case, you end up with a trailing IDC cable coming from the CD-ROM drive, which plugs into the external interface on its back edge, or slides in between the top and bottom halves of your A1200's case for internal fitting.

So how about that internal fitting then? Well, notwithstanding the unclear instruction sheet, anyone with half a brain should be able to work it out within minutes. The only thing you need to watch out for is that you make sure that pin 1 on the IDC cables is always oriented the same way on the various connectors.

As you will see from the shots on these pages, pin 1 is easily identified by the coloured stripe down one side of the cable. The little 44 way cable on the A1200 is removed and replaced with one that has three connectors on it, one for the A1200, one for your existing hard drive and one that plugs into a tiny circuit board with pins for the 44-way cable and also pins for a standard 40-way plug. This is where you plug the cable for your CD-ROM drive.

All you then need do is load up the software and follow the instructions presented. Make sure that when you are asked to use FindCD you keep scanning until you get a proper name for your CD-ROM drive rather than drive unknown. You are also asked to insert a line into your startup-sequence, but other than that the installation procedure is completely painless.

What no hard drive?

If you don't have a hard drive, but are tempted by the speeds on offer, don't do it. Running a CD-ROM without a hard drive is like expecting a horse to be pushed along by its cart. CD-ROMs can provide you with a huge amount of cheap data but without a hard drive they can be hard to set up and what will you do with all the files once you've pulled them off the CD? The route to take is definitely hard drive - memory/ processor - CD-ROM. Make sure you do it.

2-4-6-8 what speed do you appreciate?

It's easy to work out what sort of speed your CD drive is capable of. All you need remember is that a single speed CD-ROM drive runs at about 150k per second, so just multiply that figure to get to your drive's speed. If you can't be bothered to do that, here's a handy chart:

1x speed = 150kps
2x speed = 300kps
4x speed = 600kps
8x speed = 1200kps
10x speed = 1500kps
12x speed = 1800kps

These figures won't necessarily be the speeds you will actually get, especially with the faster drives on a Squirrel Classic or your A1200's IDE controller, mainly due to bottlenecks between the controller and drives.



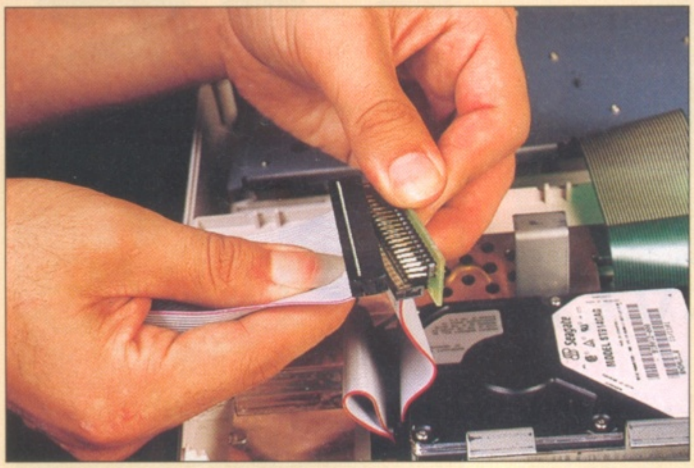
Sometimes the only way to tell the speed of your CD-ROM drive is to use it.

ROM of different colour

If you're the sort of Amiga owner who'd rather use a PlayStation for games and your Amiga for serious stuff, then you may be surprised to know that PlayStation discs are actually readable on a normal CD-ROM drive. Now don't get all excited at the prospect of being able to play Tomb Raider on your Amiga - this is a serious Amiga mag after all - but you may well be able to look at sound samples, pictures and maybe even find level passwords and the like.



Read PSX discs on your Amiga.



NEARLY DONE: We're now onto the last stages of fitting the CD-ROM drive. Once you've checked that your hard drive is properly seated once more (the new cable will be a bit intractable to start with), you can attach the cable from the CD-ROM drive itself. Remember to attach the cable so that the stripe matches the same side as the one coming from the motherboard.



FINISHED MUM: Once you've plugged the drive in, it's time to close up. When you replace the keyboard it might not go back so easily because of the added height of the circuit board. If you can't access the drive it may be because some of the pins from the circuit board are touching metal in your A1200, so turn the board sideways as shown. Remember to replace the screws properly, but don't over tighten them.

Oliver Kastl's software works nicely and supports most CD formats (including Amiga Format's problematic AFCD5). It also comes with a simple, but effective CD player which, while not pretty, does the job it's there for.

Eyetech CDPlus

On first inspection, Eyetech's unit looks fairly similar to the Gasteiner model, but there are substantial differences.

These differences first become obvious when you attempt to fit the unit. For starters, the little IDE board has become bigger. It has circuitry on it rather than just adapting the mini 44 IDE cable to the standard 40-way one. This circuitry buffers the I/O between the drive and the machine and is important because of the fact that the A1200's IDE port comes straight of the processor.

The board also has a second IDE port coming off it allowing for an additional IDE cable for connecting up to four devices.

Externally, the case provided for the drive is also somewhat different. Rather than just using a standard SCSI case and threading the IDE cable through the joins, Eyetech provide a proper IDE socket on the back of their case. What's more, this case also has a power output connector so that you can plug in extra units. This means that you don't need another power supply and it's a very thoughtful addition.

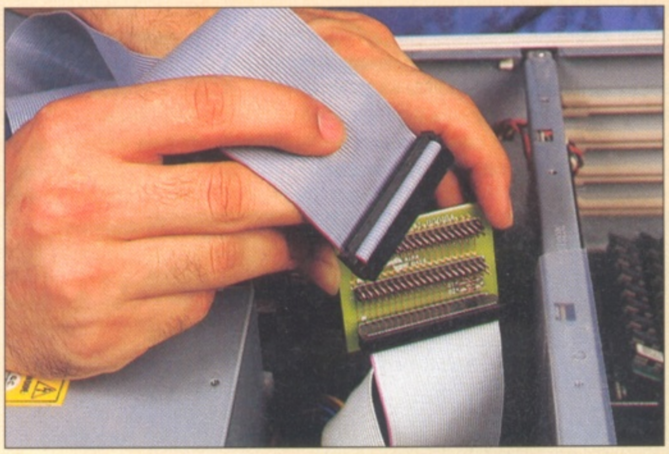
The only slight downside with this drive is that the version of IDEFix, by Oliver Kastl, that is supplied is the shareware one, but Eyetech offer a substantial discount on the full version if you decide to upgrade.

▶ 22

Fitting an ATAPI drive in your A4000



EASY PEASY: As you'd expect with a machine designed to be opened up, the whole process on an A4000 is remarkably easy. Open up your machine in the usual way and remove the hard drive cradle so you can get at the IDE port on the motherboard. Pull out the existing IDE cable taking note of the alignment of the stripe and then connect the circuitboard to the replacement IDE cable that comes with the drive.



LEMON SQUEEZY: Plug this new cable onto the motherboard and put the cable attached to your existing hard drive onto the first set of "out" pins on the circuit board. Now you can fit your CD-ROM drive into the 5.25" bay at the front of the machine and hook up to the other "out" pins on the circuit board. This method will allow for up to four IDE devices to be used on your machine, but watch out for the Master/Slave pairings.

Top CDs to get with your drive

Amiga Format

Amiga Format £5.50

The Amiga Format CDs come on the magazine every month, but I don't suppose I can shout too loudly about how good they are since I put them together each and every month. Each CD is logically divided into sections along the same lines as the magazine with drawers for Serious, ScreenPlay and PD Select sections. In addition to the commercial and shareware software that lives in these drawers, every month a sizable portion of the CD (200Mb on AFCD7) is taken up with reader submissions. If you want to see how Amiga owners all over the world are using their machines, then this is the place to look.

Since the Amiga Format CD comes out every month, you can be sure that the software contained on it is as bang up-to-date as possible and with new sections like the offline web browser being introduced all the time, it can only get better.



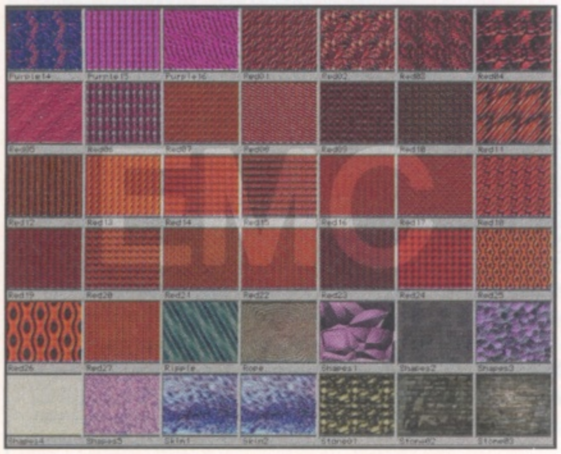
Phase 1-4

E.M.Computergraphic 01255 431389
Call for special offers

EMC's font and clipart collection won enough awards when it came on several hundred floppies, but since early last year they have received awards left, right and centre for the CD versions of the collection.

Each of the first three discs contains a mixture of images, clipart and fonts in a variety of formats including Postscript type 1 and Colorfont.

Phase 4 has seen a move from desktop publishing into the realm of desktop video. There are a set of backgrounds designed specifically for Scala but usable in any other package. The backgrounds come in PAL and NTSC overscan formats and 800 x 600 Jpegs. In addition to the backgrounds on this CD you'll also find a whole bunch of music modules suitable for use in Scala and just the thing to add pep to your presentation.



All the Phase series of CD-ROMs are superbly indexed.

Aminet Set 1-3

Any decent PD House
Prices vary

The Aminet is the single largest archive of computer software in the world with over 30,000 files. It changes and gets larger every day as new programs, mods, animations and games are uploaded all around the world. The Aminet CDs, and particularly the Aminet Sets, are an attempt to cage all those files on disc. The Aminet Sets come out every six months or so on four discs, but if you can't wait that long for the latest Shareware there are single CDs that come out roughly every two months.

All the discs are superbly organised with searchable indices that decompress files straight to your hard drive or RAM: and the most recent Aminet CDs extend their value rating by offering full price software in special versions on the disc, free of additional charge.

In recent months, you will have found Imagine 4.0, XiPaint, MainActor and many other well-known titles.



Personal Suite by Cloanto contains the Amiga's best-selling paint package – Personal Paint.



Personal Suite by Cloanto

Digita, Epic and Power 19.95

This metal-cased disc contains five top notch applications and plenty of things for you to do with them.

The king of the suite has to be Personal Paint, the Amiga's most-used art application – now in an updated

version that handles animbrushes.

Also on the CD are PFM and PFM 2, tools for creating bitmapped and colour fonts, the latest version of Superbase Personal 4, Precision/Oxxi's excellent database program and Personal Write, Cloanto's quirky little word processor.



The PlaqueGrounds make up a proportion of the Kara Collection CD.

As well as all these programs there is a wealth of backup material on the CD including the complete Eric Schwartz collection of movies (in anim format) and the work of reknowned Amiga artist Jim Sachs, who did all the artwork for Defender of the Crown, that Porsche 911 and that Ninja motorbike.

It's not often you get a collection of such good programs all together on one CD and especially not at this brilliant price.



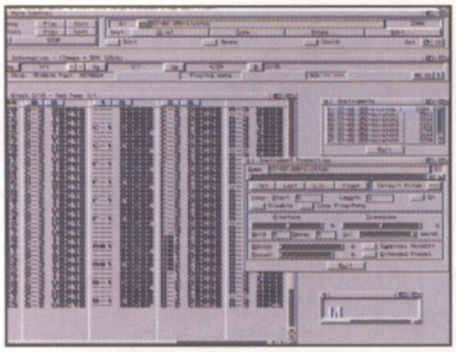
Kara Collection by Cloanto

Digita, Epic and Power 34.95

Reviewed in the next issue, the Kara Collection makes a great add-on CD for anyone interested in putting a little something extra into their desktop video productions. It contains the whole Kara collection of professional Colorfonts, animfonts and PlaqueGrounds. These are all textured backgrounds that come in loads of different shapes, purpose made as backdrops for titles.

If you don't buy Personal Suite but you still want to get the latest version of Personal Paint, well, the Kara Collection has it for you. Also on the CD is a program called ColorType a new version of PFM 2 with much improved abilities such as an antialiasing function, the ability to work with much larger images and a complete ARexx port.

Finally, if you hunt around on the CD, you'll find a few pictures that suggest that Cloanto aren't sitting on their laurels when it comes to the next revision of Personal Paint...



Soundstudio may look intimidating, but it's an Amiga musician's dream.

Octamed Soundstudio

RBF Software 169 Dale Valley Rd., Hollybrook, Southampton, SO16 6QX, Prices vary

The ultimate musician's dream, Soundstudio is to OctaMED 6 what OctaMED 6 is to Sonix. You can buy this program on floppy if you want to wimp out, but then you'd miss out on all the great samples and modules that are included as examples on the CD version.

Soundstudio has a wealth of updated and new features such as the ability to make modules with up to 64 tracks, mixing the samples as your tune is played back which allows for true stereo panning and similar effects.

Also a first for Soundstudio is the fact that it is the first program on the Amiga which supports RTS or ReTargetable Sound. It supports the Aura 12-bit sampler, MacroSystem's Toccata and MaestroPro audio cards and the new Delfina DSP card and can use them to playback tunes, freeing up the Amiga's eight bit sound channels for more mundane tasks. You can even send your music straight to disk in a format that is suitable for being recorded directly onto CD, cutting out any interpolation that might need to be done as a compromise.



Amiga Developer CD v1.1

Any decent PD House

Prices vary

Well, so far we've looked at CDs for graphics, CDs for music and CDs for general shareware. Now it's about time that we talked about CDs for programmers.

The Amiga Developer CD is an essential part of any programmers collection, giving as it does, all the 3.1 Native Developer Kit information and programs and development information on all sorts of topics from the Interchange File Format to developing new datatypes. This CD has it all.

All, that is, apart from the latest revision of the ROM Kernel manuals, the most vital part of a developer's arsenal. There are legal problems with putting these on the disc at the present time, but future revisions will probably resolve this issue. Even so, the £25-odd you'll have to pay for this CD is well worth the asking price.



Light ROM 3

Blittersoft 01908 261466 £39.99

Our last selection is specially for anyone with even the vaguest interest in 3D, whether that means Lightwave, Imagine, or even Vista. The Light ROM 3 set consists of four CDs gathering together material from all over the world – objects, textures, DEM landscape files, utilities. Basically anything even vaguely connected with 3D art on the Amiga can be found on this set.

However, you should be aware that most of the objects on the CD will have been converted from one format or another and most won't have proper surfacing sorted out. Also, because the set was intended for multi-platform use, you will be stuck with horrible old 8.3 filenames, a real pain in the arse when you are trying to distinguish between the 48 different types of Starship Enterprise there have been.

We can inlcude this CD in the top eight because there really isn't any competition. ■

Pretium

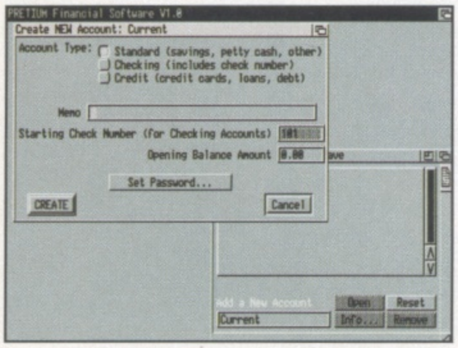
David Taylor *brings you the first review of a new accounting package, designed to keep your finances in order, from US developer Innovative Digital Dynamics.*

Keeping track of your money is not an easy task and since computers came along there have been numerous packages designed to help you out. Although none of them can actually make you any richer, it does help when you see exactly where all the money goes. It also helps you plan your future finances in terms of deciding what you can afford to do, even if that turns out to be distressingly little.

This program is easy to use and can run from a single floppy. When the program loads, you can start up a new accounts group. Accounts groups are selections of accounts for individuals or businesses. When you start a group you can opt to password protect the entire group or just the separate accounts within the group.

Getting accounts working

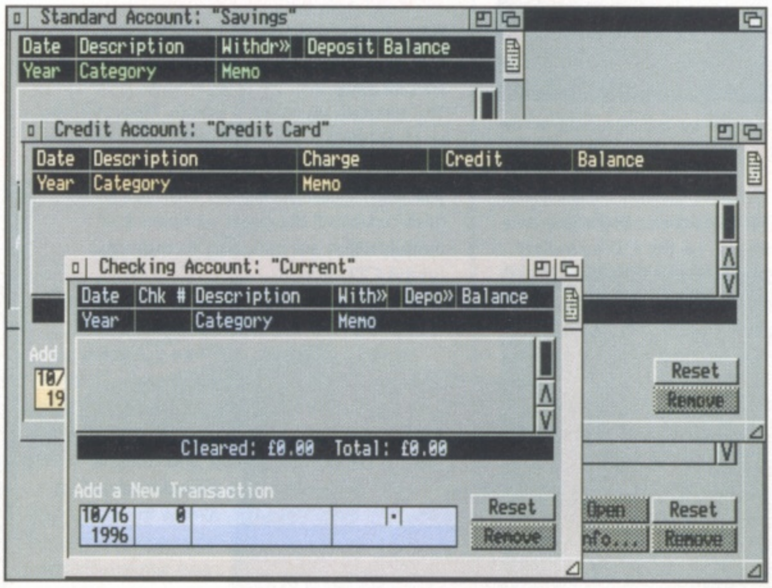
When you have set up a new group (a sub-directory will be set up in the Pretium directory), you can set up your own accounts. There are three types of accounts (although you can have multiple accounts of the same type). The different accounts are designed to cover different aspects of home finances. Thus there's a savings type, a current (cheque) account and one for credit cards. The savings account is for an account which doesn't include a cheque number with the transactions. The cheque account uses transaction numbers next to each one (you can set the first number for the cheques when you start the account). This type of account is slightly different from the UK current account system which deals with cash, cheques, direct debits, etc and you wouldn't want to have a cheque number attached with every transaction.



New accounts can be set up in one of three types, with a password, a memo and an opening balance.

The credit account works slightly differently. It assumes that the normal balance on the credit card is going to be negative and therefore displays the balances in the opposite manner to the other two. Here the positive balance (as you build up the debt) is displayed in red while the negative (when you pay the bill) puts the account into black. This might seem unusual, but is actually the logical way around when you think about it.

With all the accounts you can add a memo about the account – such as "Savings for little Tommy's education". As I said, individual accounts can be passworded separately.



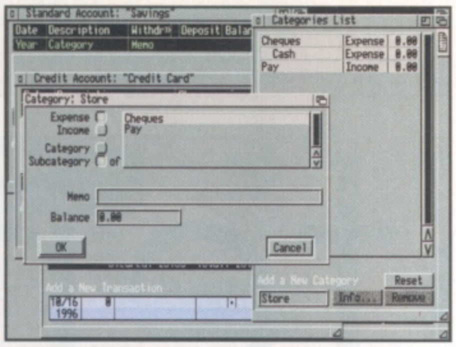
The three different accounts look pretty similar so they are differentiated by colour coding.

Money, that's what I want

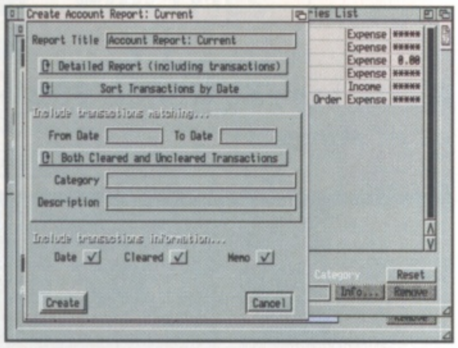
When the accounts are set up, you might want to dive straight in and start showing just how well you support the local hostelry with your pay, but it's not quite that simple. Before you actually start pumping in the figures, you need to set up some categories. Categories are easy ways to define transactions so that you will know what sort of transaction it was later on. Setting up the categories is quick and easy. You can also set up sub-categories, so that you could have cheques divided into cash and goods. The only problem is that you cannot have two categories with the same name, even if one is a sub-category of another. So having cheques that are cash and cash is not possible, even though they are really two separate things. This is probably down to the fact that the only place which records sub-categories like that is the categories screen – they don't show up as such in the transactions; you only get cash, not cheques: cash.

When you have some categories set up, you can start to enter your accounts. Transactions take up two lines and the titlebar of any account shows what each section of the line is for. Initially it's a little confusing. You can set up a category as a debit and have entered a standard amount for that transaction, but then click on the wrong part and actually enter it as a deposit. If the sections were better defined on screen it would be better, but as soon as you've got the hang of it, it's not a problem.

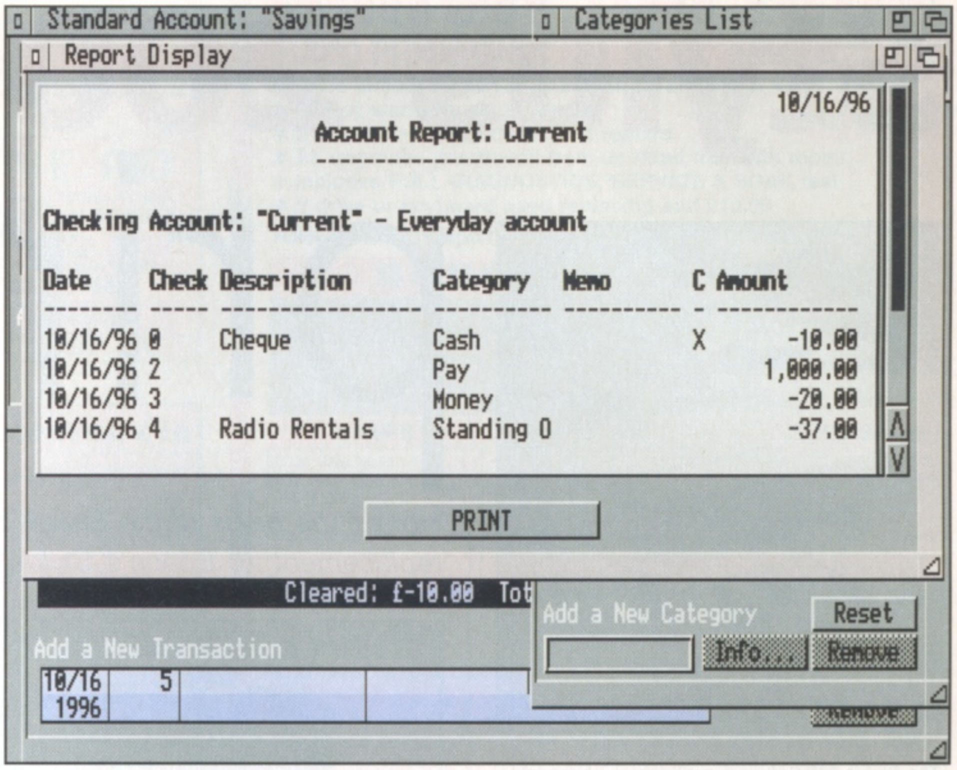
To enter a new transaction, you just need to click the mouse in the fields at the bottom of the window, fill them out and accept them. If you have clicked on an old transaction, you will go to editing it and you need to hit reset to move to a clear field before proceeding (unless you want



The categories can be set up and so can sub-categories. These help identify transactions.



Reports are generated according to parameters set, including cleared effects. The program automatically sorts these to date order so that options seems weird.

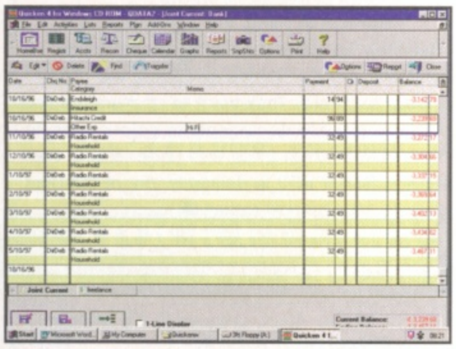


The reports are really no more than just a bank statement and there are no graphical offerings. More work in this area would definitely do much to improve the program.

to base your new transaction on an existing one of course). With a date added, you need to enter the category. If you enter a category name that doesn't exist, you will be asked if you want to add it to the list or you can use wildcards to get the nearest category, eg. che* for cheque. If you don't enter new amounts the amount from the last transaction of the type will be taken.

On each transaction you can enter a few other details, including a description – so this is the best place to keep track of cheque numbers and the like. You could keep the number and the payee in this box.

One real flaw is the lack of interactivity between accounts. Although you can set up a field for a Standing order or Direct Debit, you can't set it to go to a different account so there's no way of automatically generating standing orders from say the current account to the savings or from it to the credit card. Sure,



Pretium is supposed to be able to import Quicken files from the popular PC accounting program – to which it bears more than a passing resemblance.

you could set up different categories for each of these and just enter the category every time the transaction becomes due, but that sort of takes away the point of having the program in the first place.

Quicken, quicken, slow

You do get an import/export feature for Quicken files. Quicken is one of the most popular PC accounts packages and you can really see its influence in Pretium. The dual line transaction and categories ideas are very similar, except that Quicken can do all of the things that Pretium can't. You can see why you might want to take the files from Pretium to Quicken, but not why you'd swap back down.

This all became academic however as the program wouldn't import files from my version of Quicken (4). Part of the problem is that Quicken doesn't allow you to save files. Let me explain; every time you exit Quicken, it saves the changes so there is no need for you to manually save them. (Similarly, you need to make sure you shut Pretium's accounts window before quitting or re-booting as some changes may not be saved otherwise).

What this means though is that you can't simply save a Quicken file onto a floppy disk; you need to search out the *.qif file which Pretium is supposed to import (even though there is also a *.qtf file too – what's that I wonder). Whenever I try to import, I simply get a Date Format error and nothing and if I try the Pretium export, then Quicken just ignores it.

While I'm all in favour of any file interchange possible between programs and platforms, this one didn't work. And this really is quite unusual because all the programs are so similar.

Reports

The other feature offered is a generation of reports. These are essentially like bank statements. The refinement is that on Pretium you can mark transactions as cleared or not – so that cheques that haven't been cashed appear, but you know they are still to go through. When you create a report, you can choose to ignore uncleared effects. However, there is no way of displaying the information in different formats – a straight bank statement is all you get. While graphs and pie charts are a bit flash, they do give you a more interesting way of breaking up your expenditure and seeing whether you spend too much money on pizza.

Bearing all of this in mind, what we have here is a simple and usable program. It does what it is supposed to, but goes no further. There is little difference between this and a ledger. Sure it makes things a bit easier, but generally it's an accounts book on your Amiga. That may well suit some people, but there are many others who will prefer the flashier Money Matters from Digita. I'm also unsure how many people even want to keep track of their finances on their computer; it's a good idea to start with, but I always find that I forget to update it. With PD and Shareware ones around that might not look as professional but can do the job, I think Pretium may have a hard time finding a market for itself, especially at the price. ■

Pretium

Price: $60.45 (c.£40) inc P&P
Supplier: IDD
Contact: 001 352 373 9471

Verdict: 69%

Stylus 200 printer

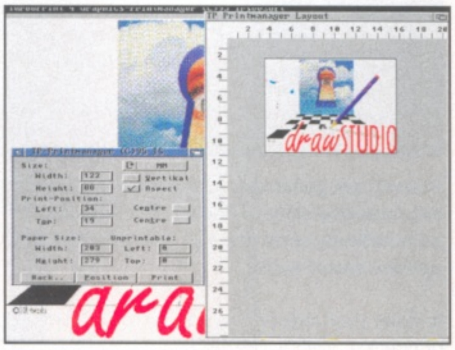


The Stylus 200 Colour is probably the best value colour printer on the market and works well providing you have a printing enhancement package with the right printer drivers.

Hot on the heels of the Epson Stylus 500, comes the Stylus 200, a replacement for Epson's Stylus IIs ink-jet printer.



Results in both b&w and colour, from programs like Final Writer, were good thanks to enhancement programs like Studio II.



Colour images like this one printed superbly on the Stylus 200 colour, especially when using the Epson coated paper.

The Stylus 200 comes in two models, the Stylus 200 and the Stylus 200 Colour. The one we have for review is the Stylus 200 Colour. The differences between the two are fairly minor. Buy the cheaper Stylus 200 and you get a black and white printer that can be upgraded later on by purchasing a colour upgrade kit which contains a colour print head/cradle and a colour ink cartridge. The Stylus 200 Colour comes with both black and white and colour print heads and three colour ink cartridges.

Like the Stylus IIs before it, the Stylus 200 Colour can be either a black and white printer or a colour one depending on which print head you have installed in the printer. The review model came with the colour print head installed and so all I had to do was install the colour ink cartridge to get under way. When I wanted to print in black and white, I then removed the colour print head using a quick release lever in the printer and installed the black and white print head followed by the black ink cartridge.

The only other setup work involved plugging in a rear paper guide, the attachment of the power and printer cables and the third party Amiga software of course. At the time of doing the review, I couldn't find any printer drivers in existing packages which were written specifically for the Epson Stylus 200, although I was able to use existing Stylus IIs drivers in programs like TurboPrint and Studio (EnPrint is another although it wasn't tested).

The maximum resolution I could print at using the old IIs driver was 360 by 720 dpi although to be honest, I couldn't see a lot of difference between that resolution and 360 by 360 dpi. The reason for this is because unlike the Stylus 500, which is a "true" 720 by 720 dpi printer, the Stylus 200, like the IIs before it, is a true 360 by 360 dpi printer and the 720 dpi resolution quoted in adverts and alike is more of a software patch than a hardware reality.

The quality of the printed image, even at 360 dpi was, as usual from a Stylus, very good. With the colour print head in place, even black images (printed using Cyan, Magenta and Yellow inks) on plain paper, looked very good. Using the Epson coated paper the results were even better. When specific drivers appear for the Stylus 200, I expect the quality it delivers on the Amiga will be slightly better.

In the past, printing on the Stylus has resulted in pages having too much ink dumped on the paper, but I found with both Studio and TurboPrint, that the results were very good as far as not saturating the page with ink. Like the Stylus 500, the 200 now uses new improved inks which dry quicker and are more vibrant in appearance, especially on the coated papers which are essential to really take advantage of the output printers like this can deliver.

If I wanted to be picky, the only thing I didn't like about the Stylus 200 was the lack of a paper feed out the front of the printer. The gaping hole where the paper comes out appears like there is supposed to be something there although in reality, there isn't an attachment for it. There's also a lack of control over the printer from the unit itself, with only a few buttons on top for loading paper, cleaning and an on/off switch. The rest is controlled by the printing enhancement software package.

After much use, the only question I had to ask myself after playing with the Stylus 200 Colour was do I go for it or the more expensive Stylus 500 as my choice of a colour printer. The difference in price is around £80 (the Stylus 500 being more expensive) and for that the 500 has both the colour and the black and white print heads in the same printer.

With that in mind, the Stylus 200 is definitely an excellent buy for those Amiga owners who don't mind swapping the print heads each time they want to go from printing black and white documents to colour ones. In fact, with a street price well under £200, the Epson Stylus 200 is definitely one of the best buys on the market today! ■

Epson Stylus 200 Colour

Price:	RRP £204.45
Supplier:	Epson UK
Contact:	01442 61144

Verdict: 91%

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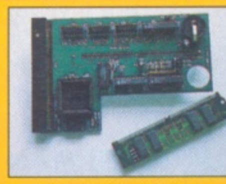


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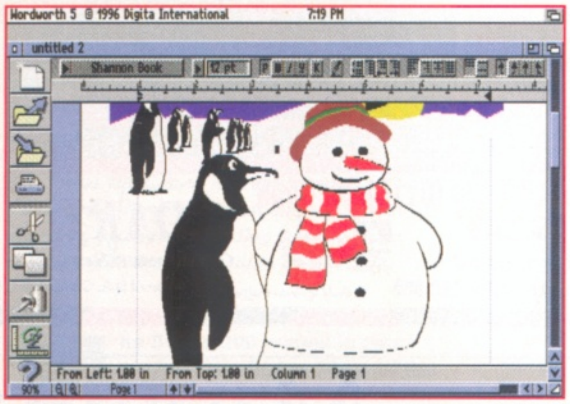
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Artworks Christmas Collection

David Taylor *reviews this issue's festive release in the shape, or rather shapes, of some original Christmas clipart.*

With the majority of CD-ROMs containing mostly dodgy quality clipart, it's surprising to still see a company that's prepared to make a go of selling some original images. Artworks have created over 100 original images which are supplied on two disks in your choice of format: EPS or CGM (which can be used in Wordworth). These images have been collected into various subject directories and all of them are shown in greyscale in the booklet that accompanies the disks.



The clipart is high quality, but tends to reflect a very modern Christmas therefore missing some of the spirit.

Although the price may seem high, these are not simply IFF scans and consequently can be imported into your DTP package and resized to any proportions without any jagged edges. As soon as you start to use the images you can see why they are worth the money, because they are actually useable. The catalogue makes it easy to find the object you want so you don't have to spend time trying to find a suitable file. Although a hundred files might seem like quite a few, it's not that many and there does seem to be a lack of religious based objects, which is a bit unusual considering that it's a Christmas based release. The sub-sections included are: frames, objects, stripsx, stripxy, baubles, motifs, stars, symbols and toys.

Also included in the catalogue is advice on using the clipart, resizing and printing as well as re-colouring, if your program supports it, although the metafiles are supplied in full colour so you shouldn't have to. It's a niche product for sure, but if you're in the market, then it's original and top quality. ■



This festive release means you can have perfectly resizable clipart for instant use in Wordworth – or any package supporting EPS.

Christmas

Price: £19.95
Supplier: Artworks
Contact: 01469 588138
Verdict: 80%

X-DVE 2.6

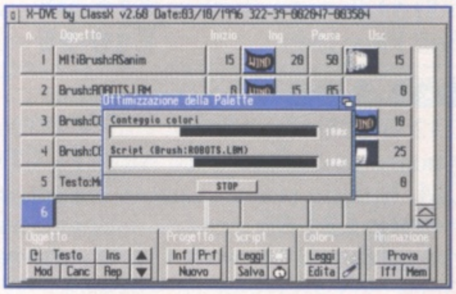
A minor upgrade to the brilliant video effects package offers a selection of new features as **David Taylor** *finds out.*

With a major update of Font Machine ready in the near future, you would have thought that ClassX had enough to keep them busy. However, they haven't stopped working on their top quality video effects package X-DVE. The new version 2.6 is now shipping and we got hold of it to see just what the new features offer.

The anti-aliasing is now better and faster and has been improved to make use of convolutions. ClassX have also speeded up the light sourced effects and objects now have faster Floyd-Steinberg remapping. The latter is extremely noticeable. Previously, remapping an object when you had fewer colours than in the image meant quite a long wait, even on an 030. If you swapped to the picture screen you could see it working slowly line by line. Now though, it zips through the object. It's still not instantaneous, but it is much quicker.

There is also a new object attribute called emboss and a new tool on the interface – script palette optimisation. This will remap all the script's objects' attributes automatically and quickly. The tool looks like a magic wand icon on the interface.

I doubt that these minor new features will be enough to convince people who haven't already bought the program to do so, but it is good news for registered users or those who are about to buy it anyway. They're all tools that are well worth having and it's good to see that ClassX are continuing to develop X-DVE and haven't just left the product alone.
The program is still available in the UK from Future mail order. ■



We got hold of the new version of X-DVE direct from ClassX, but as you can see it's the Italian interface – the English version is ready. This is the new script palette optimisation.

X-DVE 2.6

Price: £39.99
Supplier: Class X
Contact: 01225 822511
Verdict: 96%

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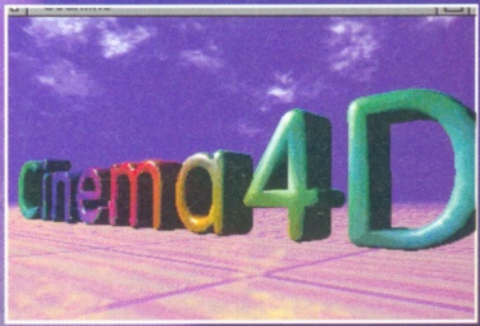
Cinema 4D 2

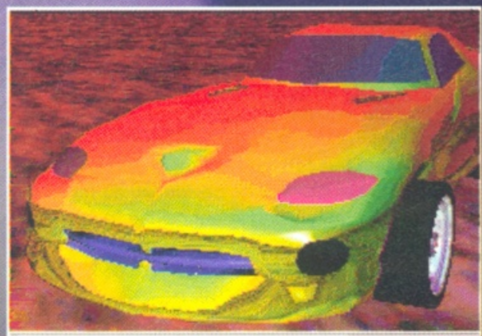
AMIGA FORMAT'S

Bumper Christmas issue

is even more jam-packed than usual this month. Not only do we have the complete version of Amiga Format Gold winning 3D package **CINEMA 4D 2** on our Coverdisk, we also have previews of up and coming products like **DRAWSTUDIO, PERSONAL PAINT 7** and **CINEMA 4D 3**.

Check out our in-depth review of **AWEB II**, our look back at 1996 and our continued look at emulation. All coming in issue 93 of *Amiga Format* – the world's best-selling Amiga magazine!











CD check out

Ben Vost *has been sifting through the latest CD-ROM releases to find the best on offer this month.*

A superb collection of 91 original fonts, some colourful background clipart and a collection of useful utilities. It's all here in the CD-ROM check out this month. Find out just how good they all are.



Computer Safari Collection: A really cracking collection of typefaces from EMC.

Computer Safari Collection

If you've ever bought an EMC CD, you'll be familiar with the superb organisation and the Computer Safari collection is no exception. The disc is only half full, but contains all 91 fonts created by the Safari design team. These fonts tend to be decorative rather than functional, but are in a wide range of styles, from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs to fonts based on Star Trek titles, Romulan and Klingon.

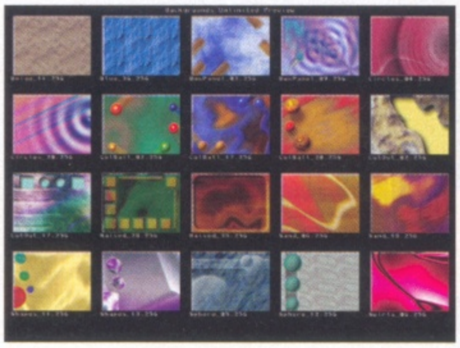
While some don't have all the characters, they've all got kerning pairs and this attention to detail really shows through. EMC also give you every font in every possible format, so there should be no whining about having to convert.

The CGs are in two styles, suitable for ProPage/PageSetter and also for Workbench. You might think £40 is a bit steep, but since they're all original typefaces created from scratch by a talented team of designers, unavailable in any other fashion, what choice do you have? Get this CD. ■

Computer Safari Collection

Price: £39.99
Supplier: EMC
Contact: 01255 431389

Verdict: 92%



Backgrounds Unlimited: Scala and Backgrounds Unlimited make the perfect couple.

Backgrounds Unlimited

Our second CD from EMC this month sits firmly in their favoured territory – colourful clipart. But like Phase 4 from the same company, this CD concentrates solely on video backdrops. Unlike Phase 4, every single file on Backgrounds Unlimited has been painstakingly created by hand. There is no PD on this disc, but all of the images themselves are freely available for use in your video productions. And very nice they are too. Although some of them might be a bit heavy for text to sit easily over them, they can still be used as transition screens – and there aren't that many of them anyway.

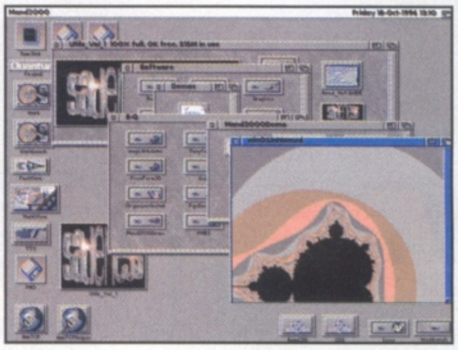
The remainder are loosely sorted into directories that describe the overall look of the files therein and each directory has an index for swift and easy previewing of the individual files. I would like to see a proper cataloguing program used for the previews, so that a thumbnail could be double-clicked on to see the full image, but other than that there is little or nothing to complain about on this CD.

Because of the nature of video the pictures come in PAL and NTSC sizes. Additionally, there are Jpeg versions of the images in 800 x 600 for people who want to use them on graphic cards or PCs. Finally, all the images on the disc have a sixteen colour offset specifically for use with Scala. Yet again, EMC have come up with a winner. ■

Backgrounds Unlimited

Price: £39.99
Supplier: EMC
Contact: 01255 431389

Verdict: 94%



Utilities Experience: Absolutely chock-a-block with top notch shareware.

Utilities Experience

This disc is brought to you by the same people who created the popular AGA Experience CD. It's very well laid out with most of the software able to run directly from disc. Some of the packages which require installation have even been installed directly to the CD, just so you can have a look at them before you decide to install them on your hard drive.

The directories are divided into appropriate categories like graphics, business, video and so on, and if there are too many icons, these directories are further subdivided into drawers labelled A-G, H-Q, R-Z, or something similar. As such, this makes for very easy-to-find programs. As well as all the PD and Shareware programs on this disc, you'll also find a bunch of demos of commercial programs including DPaint, Digital Universe, ADPro and others. Some of these demos are pretty old, and most have been seen elsewhere, but they've not been collected together in one place before – handy if you want to buy a new bit of software and you want an idea of what to get.

We've had a bit of a hard time reviewing this CD. The first couple of copies went AWOL and so this review has been delayed. This means that not all the software on the disc is the current version, but then again, this isn't surprising since as soon as the disc was published it was bound to be out of date – that's Shareware authors for you. But at only £12.99, you get a beautifully organised, great selection of titles. ■

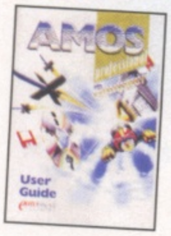
Utilities Experience

Price: £12.99
Supplier: Sadeness
Contact: 01263 722169

Verdict: 85%

Mail order

AMOS Pro Compiler 2



Speed up your AMOS programming with the AMOS Pro Compiler 2 from Europress, which F1 Licenceware have re-released for a limited period. If you want to know more about the program, we ran a review of it in the April 1996 issue, where we gave it a respectable 87 per cent.

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Issue 69



Art Effect could well be the most powerful graphics package that the Amiga has ever seen. David Taylor introduces an extensive six page review. Reviews of DOpus 5.5, OctaMED Soundstudio and the Cyberstorm Mk II. Plus the start of a brand new tutorial designed to help you create your very own web pages. With all the regulars as well don't miss out!

Issue 68



The Amiga is just as capable as any other machine of producing high quality DTP documents – Larry Hickmott has all the information you need to help you get the most out of your Amiga. Plus reviews of Termite TCP, IBrowse and Datachrome Gold. You can't afford to miss it!

Issue 67



The Internet is still the buzzword of the nineties. We bring you the complete guide to the WWW, Amiga style. What software can you use on your Amiga and who provides the best service for Amiga owners? Plus, reviews of X-DVE 2.5 and all the usual tutorials.

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● **Amiga A4000/30**, 270Mb HD, 10Mb RAM, excellent art software: LightWave, D/Personal Paint, Photogenics, Scala MM400 and games, utilities, extra disk drive, £810 ono. 510 deskjet printer available. Call Robert on 01926 484380.

● **Amitek** 4Mb Fast RAM, PCMCIA card for Amiga 600/1200, £65 ono. Call ☎ 01797 227172.

● **Amiga 1200**, Amitek external disk drive, Star LC10 printer, mouse, joystick, blank disks, £300 ono. Call ☎ 01642 677049.

● **Amiga 1200**, 82Mb HD, 6Mb, 33MHz FPU, Microvitec monitor, 2x CD-ROM drive, extra floppy drive, over £1,000 software, AmiFile-Safe Professional, Photogenics 2 CD and much more £1,000. Phone for details ☎ 01908 691439.

● **Amiga 4000/40**, NEC multisync 3D 14-inch, 2+4Mb, 120Mb HD, £1,200. Call ☎ 01895 234099.

● **Lion King** for A1200, Zool, Methane Bros, James Pond, Pinball Fantasies, Alfred Chicken and Nigel Mansell's World Championship for CD32, offers please. Call or fax Jay on ☎ 01203 473333. Good condition.

● **GVP accelerator** 1230, 4Mb RAM, 40MHz with original box and software, £170. Contact Peter Freeman after 6pm on ☎ 0114 234 0308, or e-mail Kevin Snowflake@the net.co.uk.

● **Supra 8Mb** memory expansion for A500?+ £150 ono. Call ☎ 01273 593764. Ask for Andrew.

● **GVP A1230** accelerator for A1200, 8Mb memory, 40MHz 68030 + 40MHz FPU and clock, £300 ono. Call ☎ 01273 593764. Ask for Andrew.

● **A1200,** £160, as new, includes carriage; monitor £100, external drive plus 200 disks £50; hard drive and memory. A4000 030, boxed as new, £550. Please call ☎ 0956 558024, evenings only.

● **Amiga 1200**, 6Mb RAM, 68030 Viper accelerator, 209Mb HD, SCSI interface, Commodore 1940 monitor, 14.4 R baud modem, software, books, magazines, £650. Call Robert ☎ 0181 748 3793.

● **Amiga spares** available for A500, 500+, 1500, 2000, two internal drives and all chips available. Call ☎ 01222 455464.

● **Emplant** basic board with 586dx module and latest Mac and PC software. Complete with all manuals and PC BIOS image, £200 ono. Call ☎ 01222 455464.

● **Supra fax** modem 288, boxed and complete with PSU, leads, manual and software, £140. Own the best-looking modem with digital speed display. Call ☎ 01222 455464.

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● **GVP HD8+** SCSI-2 controller and 121Mb SCSI drive. Comes with 2Mb on board and boots your system into Workbench 3.1. Boxed with disk and manual, £175 ono. Call ☎ 01222 455464.

● **Amiga 1200**, 120Mb hard drive, 4Mb accelerator with FPU, 14-inch multisync, CD-ROM, external disk drive, years of mags with Coverdisks, software, video digitiser, all £520. Call Stewart ☎ 0181 998 2929.

● **CD32** plus SX-32 with 8Mb Fast RAM and 176Mb hard drive with software, £320. Card £60; 4Mb Zip RAM £60, Rapidfire +8 £140. Call Paul ☎ 01570 493440. ■

Amiga answers

Amiga Basic Listings

I have just bought a second hand Amiga that has a lot of disks which seem to have various Amiga BASIC programs stored on them. Can you tell me how I can get a print-out of a complete program – the text editor and word processing programs that I have all refuse to work. Also, is it going to be possible to run these programs from a more modern BASIC?

David Mayes
Romford, Essex

I haven't used Amiga BASIC for a long time but, if my memory serves me correctly, it saved programs using a tokenised form which used less space and was quicker to load and save. This, presumably, is why your text editor and word-processor cannot make sense of the files.

You'll be able to print listings of the programs by starting Amiga BASIC, loading the program you wish to look at, and then typing LLIST into Amiga BASIC's command window. If however you really want to be able to be able to read such programs into a word-processor it's going to be necessary to save them in what is called ASCII format. As far as I remember this couldn't be done from the Amiga BASIC menu but it's easy enough to do from the command window using the SAVE command. Just specify an appropriate

device:filepath/filename

enclosing it in double quotes, then follow the name with a comma and the letter A like this...

SAVE "df0:myprogram",A

The experts at hand to help you...



Whenever you try out something different with your Amiga, or buy a new piece of kit, you might come across problems that you don't know how to solve. That's what these pages are here for – to guide you through your difficulties and get you using and enjoying your machine to the full. We've got a great group of experts to hand with their own in-depth knowledge in special Amiga areas. So put them to the test, and send your queries in.



Paul Overaa *is our Operating Systems programming expert. He has written several books, including: Mastering Amiga Assembler, Mastering Amiga ARexx and Mastering Amiga C. When he's not drinking red wine or wind surfing, Paul can be found making music and designing programs on his Amiga.*



Gary Whiteley *is our expert on video and graphics. He regularly produces work for films and TV. Gary has also written several books on his favourite subjects – among them is Amiga Desktop Video, published by Future Publishing (call ☎ 01225 822511 to order a copy). Gary also regularly reviews new products for Amiga Shopper.*



John Kennedy *is our hardware and music expert. He has written Supertests and features alike for Amiga Shopper in the past He also writes features and tutorials on a range of subjects for our sister magazine Amiga Format. This month in Amiga Shopper John continues with his tutorial on CanDo.*



Larry Hickmott *is our DTP and word processing expert. He produces his own DTP magazine called Em and has written several books, including The Wordworth Companion for Digita. This month he reviews the latest colour printer from Epson.*

Answers contents

If you're looking for a particular problem, this handy index will help you find the answers you need:

That creates an ordinary text file version of the program which you'll then be able to read into a word-processor. It's this latter pathway, incidentally, that you will need to use when transferring programs to an alternative BASIC. HiSoft BASIC is going to be the best choice for porting Amiga BASIC programs since, in all probability, the programs will then run without you having to make alterations to them (with alternative languages, namely Blitz BASIC or AMOS this would most certainly not be the case).

Paul

Lost Memory

Before double clicking on a program's icon I record the available memory in the Workbench title bar. When I then start/stop the program, and wait for it to terminate, there always seems to be some memory loss. I'd like to know where the memory goes and whether it could be due to a bug in the operating system?

Benjamin Davis
Dumfries, Scotland

Without knowing what program you're using it's difficult to say. It's certainly not due to an O/S bug but it could be due to a flaw in the memory allocation and deallocation routines of the program concerned and, if this is the case, the memory doesn't actually 'go' anywhere. It's simply that the program asks the system for some memory (your Amiga maintains lists of memory that is not in use) but does not return it to the system before terminating. Any memory 'lost' in this fashion is still there although your machine cannot re-allocate it believing it to be still required by the program that originally asked for it!

There are however various other reasons for apparent memory loss that do not indicate a faulty coding. A library that was being used by a program can in fact remain in memory after the program has closed the library and terminated. In this latter case however you would get an initial apparent memory loss when first running the program. After that no further memory reductions should occur.

Paul

Shell Window Return-key Snag

I have been trying to write a C function that behaves in the same way as getch() on the PC. I know that the K&R manual shows how to write the function but this doesn't seem to work as it should on the Amiga – the function waits for the return key to be pressed. Please can you help!

Steve Broadbent
Redruth, Cornwall

The problem with the K&R example you've mentioned is that getchar(), depending on the computer system being used, can exist in either interactive (which handles direct key input) or line-oriented forms (which wait for the return key to be pressed). Amiga programs which are kicked off from a Shell window are using 'CON:' windows and these are based on the line-oriented I/O model. So I'm afraid that, as far as 'CON:' windows are concerned, you are (for simple programs at least) stuck with the return key problem. Once you get into the Intuition and devices I/O areas of Amiga programming such problems disappear because it's possible to use things like the Intuition IDCMP system to obtain messages about key presses (and any other events) and at this stage all things become possible.

If however you want an easy way of collecting key presses directly, and your programs are essentially Shell type window based, then one solution is to open a 'RAW:' window and use this for your program's I/O operations. RAW: provides unbuffered screen and keyboard I/O and key presses can be read (unechoed) by a program immediately. (There is a lot of information about the RAW: console device, low level read/write operations etc., in the AmigaDOS Manual published by Bantam Books).

Paul

AmigaDOS Info

Can you tell me where I might obtain some in-depth information on AmigaDOS. I've recently purchased some second hand RKM manuals, which I expected would contain a lot of AmigaDOS material, and was rather surprised to find nothing of interest at all.

John Birch
via email

There are two main sources of AmigaDOS technical information for non-developers: Firstly the AmigaDOS manual published by Bantam Books (ISBN: 0-553-35403-5) and although the 3rd (latest) edition only covers release 2.04 it's still a useful read. The other book well worth getting hold of is Ralph Babel's The Amiga Guru Book which can be obtained from Almathera (tel: 0181 687 0040).

Paul

Local Variables

I've been coding in assembly language now for a couple of years and am now trying to write a Workbench runable utility that can have multiple copies running whilst only having one version of the program present in memory. Something is clearly going wrong with my current attempts (all my code is enclosed) and if anyone at Shopper has ideas on what I'm doing wrong some help would sure be appreciated.

Michael D. Greensmith
Potters Bar

Sorry it's not possible to reproduce your code (there's far too much to put in print) but it's easy to explain where the problems lie – when a second instance of your program is executed it immediately overwrites existing window, menu and other global variables. Because of this, when you then close the first instance of the program, the exit code actually kills the resources that had been allocated by the second copy of the program. Hence the Gurus!

The key to creating a resident version is to eliminate the global variables used for windows, menus and so on. This entails adding a Link instruction to the start of your program and building a set of local variables by defining a structure using the Amiga system include file STRUCTURE macro. Here's a typical variable set...

```
STRUCTURE   MyLocals,0
     ULONG  ld_window_p
     ULONG  ld_visual_info_p
     ULONG  ld_menu_p
     LABEL  MyLocals_SIZEOF
```

You can include library base variables in this set if you like although it's not strictly necessary (once a library has been opened it's base address will not alter as long as there is at least one task using the library). Either way - with these arrangements it then became possible to allocate space for local variables using a link instruction like this...

```
     link   a4,#-MyLocals_SIZEOF
```

and deallocate using...

```
     unlk   a4
```

You also need to change all instructions that reference global variable locations in your original program so that the equivalent locations within the stack area are used instead (using indirect references via the frame pointer specified in the link instruction). Unfortunately the Link instruction sets the frame pointer to the top of the reserved stack space and expects the programmer to then reference locations within the space using negative displacements. Normal Amiga structure offsets created using the STRUCTURE macro however are produced as positive displacements designed to work from a low-memory base address and the way I get around this is to adjust the frame pointer so that it points to the low-memory end of the reserved stack space like this...

```
_main   link     a4,#-MyLocals_SIZEOF
        movem.l  a2-a6/d2-d7,-(sp)
preserve regs (all one line)
        lea      -
MyLocals_SIZEOF(a4),a4     frame pointer to
bottom (all one line)
```

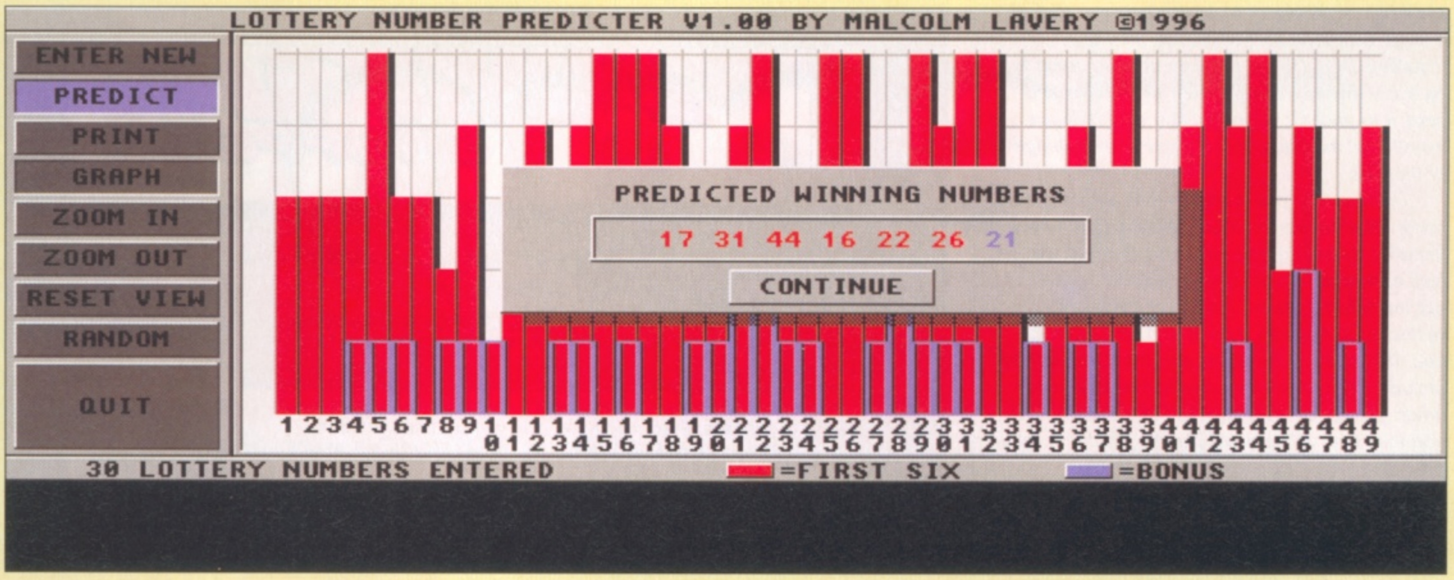
At this point register a4 would then point to the base of the local variable structure as desired and the remaining translation simply involves changing all instructions which involve local variables so that this local variable set is used. For example your original menu pointer access instructions which take this sort of form...

```
        lea      menu_p,a1
```

would need to be changed to...

```
        lea      ld_menu_p(a4),a1
```

Static, ie unchanging, data (fixed text strings etc) can of course all be referenced in the same way as your original program. Do remember, incidentally, that you must readjust the frame pointer register to it's original value



The rather excellent Lottery Predictor program created by Steve Bye and Malcolm Lavery, written entirely in Amos. All the authors ask for is a little consideration if any of our readers ever do hit the jackpot!

before executing the Unlk instruction.
Hope this helps!

Paul

Startup Blues

I am new to using computers and would like your help with a problem I have with the Amiga 1200. Each time I boot up I get two prompts in the top left hand corner of the Workbench screen and I have to click on each of them before I can start any program.

Please can you tell me in simple English how to delete them so that they do not appear each time I start up. Also what do I have to do when I get the prompt "unable to open 'IconX'".

I have enclosed receipts for my equipment so that you can see what equipment I have. I use the PAL television as a monitor and also a SAE for the return of the receipt.

P Longley
Stanmore

Firstly, you nearly gave me heart failure when I found your receipts. Never send your original receipts to anyone – you may need them in the future for insurance purposes – because they might get misplaced, especially in a magazine office! However, I've bundled them straight back up and returned them. Keep them safe!

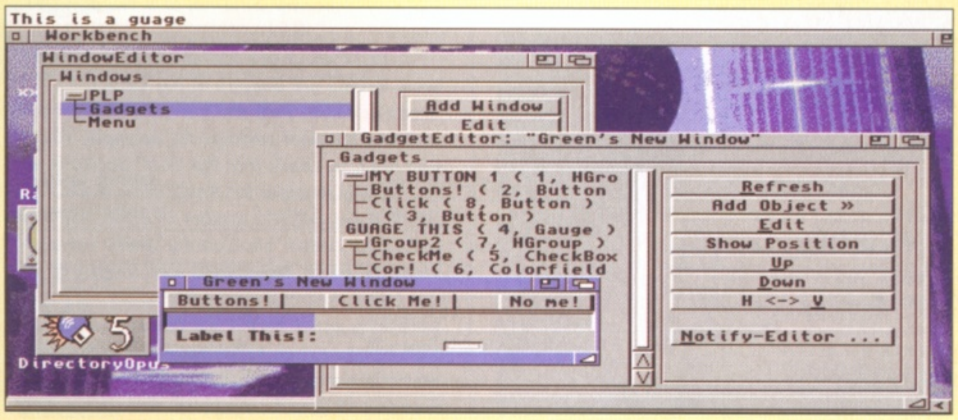
As to your problems, they are because the original owner of the machine had installed some of his own software. The sheet you sent was a drawing of the screen with a blank window and a requester asking "Program 'Launchpad' has not returned. Should I wait some more?". I guess that you have the program Launchpad in your WBStartup drawer which you can find on the boot partition of your hard drive, which will be named either Workbench or similar or possibly dh0:. If you look for this drawer inside that partition and open it, you should see an icon for Launchpad.

If you can't find this drawer, it may be that the icon has been removed, but that the drawer itself is still there. To see a drawer without an icon, you need to select the window and choose Show all files from the Window menu on Workbench.

The reason why the program has returned is because it is not set to. You have two choices here. The first, simplest and probably best for yourself, is to move the Launchpad utility out of the WBStartup drawer so that it isn't started every time you boot up (that's what happens to any program you put in that drawer) or delete it from there altogether. The second is to click once on the program icon and then select the Information item from the Icon menu on Workbench. Then click on New under the Tooltypes part and type DONOTWAIT and then press <return>. Save the changes and the program should now boot correctly at startup. Launchpad is a program launcher and although I can't be sure, I think that the empty window is its interface with no programs set up in its preferences. Remove it from startup and it will disappear.

The Iconx problem is simple too. Iconx is a program that the Amiga uses to launch scripts through Workbench instead of making you go to the CLI and typing "execute <script>". It should be included on an A1200, but it doesn't seem to be. Find the original WB3 floppy disks that come with your A1200 and then open a Shell. Insert the floppy into the internal drive and type "Copy df0:c/iconx c: <return>". The Iconx command will be copied and should now be available. You may find that other commands are missing as well though, so it might be worth copying all the disk's contents across: "Copy df0: sys: all <return>".

Dave



Requesters can be extremely useful – but if they keep popping up when they are not wanted or needed they can become a bit of a pain. Binning the program responsible, will solve the problem.

Oopsi!

When I click on the DOOPSI Install.Eng icon I am prompted to insert my Workbench disk and a few seconds after I do so I am prompted with "Unable to open your tool 'C:Installer'". I have read the important note telling me you are not allowed to distribute the Installer program; however, I am confused and need some clear instructions.

PS I enjoy the lottery program.

C Kingstree
Dumfrie

I didn't think that anybody didn't have Installer anymore, but here we go again. You are right that we can't just put Installer in there, but it is freely available from the Internet, on every Amiga Format CD, from any PD Library, included on many other Coverdisks and on any commercial program disk that requires installing. Installer is the Commodore Installer utility which is used by installation scripts to

copy bits of programs to special places. It gives a small script file a user friendly interface. Installing DOOPSI to a floppy drive is going to be tricky anyway, but get hold of Installer and copy it to your C: directory. You could always install it all manually, but it requires knowledge of the CLI.

Don't worry, you weren't alone as we got some other letters from people who didn't have Installer. Including one man who thought we had committed an act comparable to treason by not including Installer in spite of copyright restrictions. Anyway, that should sort it out for you. If you are still unsure, ask the PD library to include instructions for copying Installer over when you order the disk (the disk should cost you less than £1 and will be very useful in the future).

Dave

Crash, bang, wallop!

I have an A1200 with a 4Mb expansion board. About three weeks ago my computer crashed. After leaving it turned off for two or three minutes, I turned it on and all I got was a dark purple screen with an occasional white line on it. After retrying it finally came back on.

Since this happened it has crashed at least once a day. One time it crashed six times on about half an hour. Even when I knock the desk the computer sits on, it crashes. One of two things happen when it crashes. Either it goes completely blank or the mouse pointer will stop and nothing will happen. I have checked the memory and disk drives for viruses and everything is clear.

David Simpson
Moray, Scotland

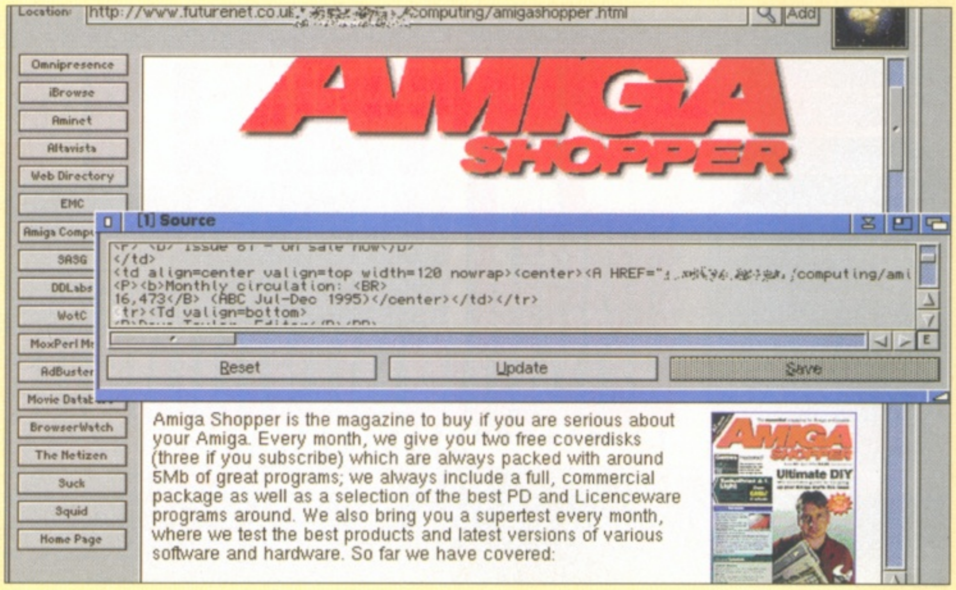
The symptoms your poor A1200 suffers from do not sound like the results of a virus. I've yet to hear of a virus which doesn't like it when furniture is knocked! Instead there must be something loose to cause so many crashes.

Check that the power supply plug is fully inserted. Sometimes it can appear to be fitted correctly, when it really needs pushing about 5mm or so home. Check also the wire in the PSU plug in case it's worked it's way loose.

However, the main culprit could be the memory expansion. It's easy to check: with the computer switched off, of course, remove the memory expansion and then use the computer for a while. If it doesn't crash, you've solved the problem. If it continues to crash and you have checked the power supply connections, there is a fault with the A1200 which is probably beyond a spot of DIY to fix. You'll need to contact a repair centre.

If the memory board is at fault, it could be several things. First of all, check that the memory chips or SIMMs are well seated. Make sure that the board is fitted properly to the trapdoor socket. In all but a handful of cases (for example, some 040 based cards), the trapdoor lid can be refitted. Leaving it off can cause it to wobble whenever the keyboard is used: these vibrations could cause a momentary bad connection and the result would be a crash. If you aren't happy fitting cards to the trapdoor, find a computer repair shop with Amiga experience and ask them to fit the card for you.

John



Visit Amiga Shopper's interesting and informative Web pages.

Serial killer?

When I use Demon Internet set up with Termite TCP I have no problems connecting up to Demon on my A2000 fitted with a GVP IO Extender. When I use other software, for example, AmiTCP or Miami, they don't recognise the serial port. I have even wiped the hard drive and reformatted it in case there was any Demon software left.

Mike Preston
London

An interesting problem. I would guess that the GVP IO extender provides at least one new serial port, and makes this available in a similar way to the standard serial device, which all Amigas come with as standard, by providing a new driver. It could be that the new ports are not being picked up by AmiTCP or Miami, but I find this strange, because although AmiTCP is incredibly and hideously complicated, it is also incredibly flexible – for example, as well as dial-up modem accounts, I use AmiTCP to provide a TCP/IP link over Ethernet to a WindowsNT server.

First of all, check that the GVP supplied serial drivers are present in the DEVS: directory. Make sure you can use them from a standard terminal package for example. You'll also need to check that the SLIP device is set up properly in order for AmiTCP to work. If you examine the SANA2 drawer in ENV:, you'll see some files called "slip0.config" and "rhslip0.config". You should load these into a text editor, and make sure the references to the necessary serial device are correct. That is, change references to serial.device to the serial drivers supplied by GVP. You should also try experimenting with any serial speeds mention in this file, starting with a speed of 19200.

John ■



We've yet to hear of an Amiga 1200 that crashes when knocked into. The obvious explanation is a loose wire somewhere.

Choice Domain

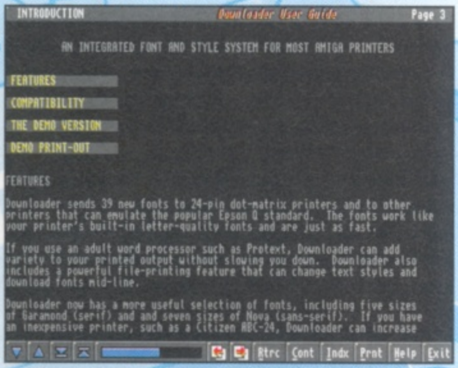
A useful and highly flexible database, a feature packed spreadsheet, a comprehensive guide for beginners to the Amiga and two farewell disks from Vark – all in the Public Domain this month.

PDChoice

Downloader II

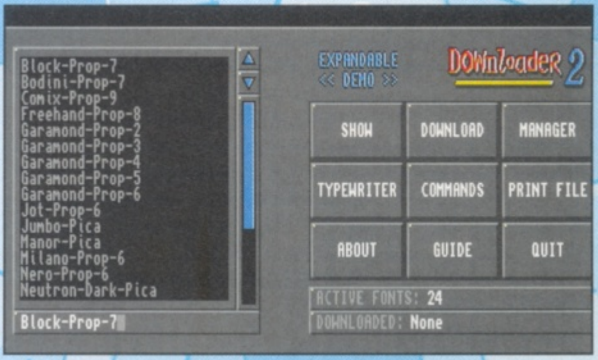
This is a very nicely written utility that allows you to download new fonts to your EpsonQ compatible printer. If you're tired of the standard fonts that you get with your text editor, you can use Downloader and send a nice new font.

Downloader is written entirely in Amos, but don't let that put you off because, despite the bad reputation Amos has earned itself for producing badly written utilities, Downloader's author, Earnest Ruckle certainly knows how to harness the better side of Amos Pro. The program comes with complete on-line help and uses an Amos version of AmigaGuide, that looks good and works well. However, Downloader does a lot more than just download fonts to your printer. You can use the 'typewriter' option to turn your printer into a pseudo electronic typewriter – in other words whatever you type on your keyboard is immediately reflected on paper – simple but effective if you need that sort of thing. One of the more useful features I enjoyed messing about with is Downloader's ability to send codes to your printer (you can do this by hand in your text editor of course but it is a messy process involving escape codes). With Downloader you can select an attribute like 'double width' or 'italics' and then simply click on send. There are many attributes catered for like underline, shadow, proportional, condensed, double high and many others. You can also set margins and line spacing too.



The on-line user guide is helpful and informative.

Downloader can be used to set up your printer and print a selected text file independently of your word processor/text editor or you can just use Downloader to set up your printer then load your text editor. I used Downloader in conjunction with Edword Pro V5.6, it worked fine except for the fact that Edword couldn't print when Downloader was still running because Downloader has the printer port open so Edword thought the printer was in use. This could be solved if Ernest put an option in Downloader to close the Prt: device. Downloader was written more with Protext in mind and in fact provides a printer driver for it. There is also the option to download fonts from the Shell, as I recently discovered, which solves my previously described problem especially as Edword supports shell commands.



Downloader 2's front-end is simple clear and concise.

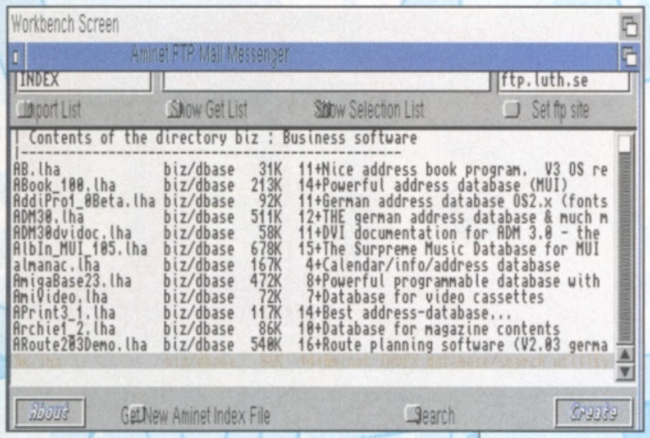
Downloader supports a pretty impressive 137 ARexx commands too, not something you often see in an Amos written program. This PD version only allows you to play with four fonts from a possible 39 and you have to register to unlock the extra fonts. I really do rate this a very well implemented and very useful program.

Verdict: 94% Star buy

Who, what, where, when, why, how...

Product	No. of disks	Type of product	Price	Supplier	Contact	Verdict	Page
Amiga Assist	1	Beginners ref	3.45	5D Licenceware	01709-888127	88	40
Downloader II	1	Printer util	1.45	Roberta Smith DTP	0181-4551626	94	37
Comms Work	1	Comms compilation	Call	Roberta Smith DTP	0181-4551626	90	38
Vark #15	2	Util compilation	2.90	Roberta Smith DTP	0181-4551626	65	38
DB 3.3	290K	Database	N/A	Aminet/biz/misc/Db3_3.lha		90	38
Easy Calc 2.0	211K	Spreadsheet	N/A	Aminet/biz/misc/easycalc2_0f.lha		98	39
GRn	232K	Newsreader	N/A	Aminet/comms/news/Grn2_1a.lha		85	40
NewsGEd	23K	News Group Editor	N/A	Aminet/comms/news/NewsGed.lha		89	40

▶ 38



AmiMessenger can save you lots of time trawling through FTP sites.

Comms Work Disk

This is a disk of Shareware/PD comms utilities only available to members of Roberta Smith's Amiga International Club, (call Roberta Smith DTP for more details). Floppy disks full of Comms stuff are not really that useful if you already have AmiTCP, a browser and an FTP program because you tend to get all your PD from the Internet. But, this disk has five utilities on it that I have never come across.

AmiMessenger gets any file from the Aminet that you want and sends it to you via e-mail. You load an Aminet index file and just click on the file or files that you require. AmiMessenger will then formulate a mail script for you that you send to a server by e-mail. Within a few hours, or a few days, your file will be posted to you. You will then have to decode it with something like UUXT (supplied). This may sound like a lot of bother for nothing, but once you realise that this can save you a lot of time wading through FTP sites it's a pretty nice utility to have.

Of course this is only really of great benefit to those with e-mail access but there is some other good stuff on this disk too. MailEd is an e-mail editor that handles PGP encryption and formats your mail for you. There's Version 3.3 of Airmail an excellent e-mail system and FaxGate, which allows you to convert e-mail's to faxes. SwaperBox (sic) wouldn't run on my system without crashing – apparently it swaps addresses between 'traders' – you can make of that what you will.

Verdict: 90% **Star buy**

Vark 15

Vark says this will be his last compilation and just to prove he has had enough of the Amiga scene he says farewell with two disks of rubbish. Whether it's just bad luck that I do not personally like or require the programs on offer or that most of them really are just naff is debatable. The two disks are full of lha archives and a commodore installer is provided to de-archive them in a very friendly manner. This is important, but then so is the quality of the programs.

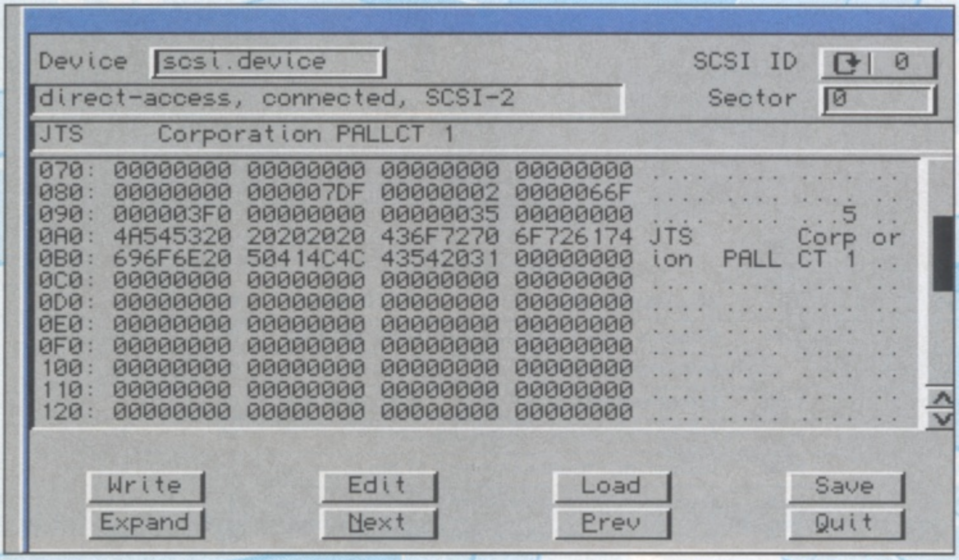
The majority are what I call PD fodder. ArcDest is a cli util to unpack archives from within an AmigaGuide document. Diskfull has been around for a while but this newer version offers a few enhancements – allowing you to fill up floppies to their full potential. Cleandisk fills your disk with data and then deletes it, so old data cannot be retrieved. FixRombo10 is for people with the Rombo MegaMix Master (yes, both of you). It fixes the sound samples so they can be used in other sampling packages. HappyEnv could be useful – it sets up a device handler for Env: and promotes the best use of environment variables. HDPlayer allows you to play .Wav or .IFF sound samples direct from your hard drive, with GUI.

HD-Examine allows you to examine and alter sectors on your hard disk which can be useful, although definitely not for beginners. HugeBench is a set of screenmode prefs for Multiscan monitors. Kick2File writes your Kickstart ROM into a data file which is very handy for the Amiga emulator doing the rounds on the PC at the moment. N_VEditor is for editing Non-Volatile RAM on the CD^{32}. NTeddy is a 'virtual teddy bear simulator' which basically allows you to look at a 3D teddy bear from different perspectives. Yes, it is as daft and pointless as it sounds – but a bit of fun never hurts. SuperFoulWorm is a game that the author says he was too lazy to do any graphics for so you need to use the graphics out of another game. No comment. MegaFloppy is a new file system at the beta stage that the author says will probably not work properly. WRM_Selector will allow you to select a different set of sound effects for the game Worms. AB3DII_Files are a set of patches and extra files for the game Alien Breed 3D II. Retire could be of use to script/installer writers, it deletes old 'User-Startup' entries for you.

Vmailto is a mailto script for Voyager. Voyager does have a mailto script but the author couldn't get it to work so if you have the same problem, then here is your answer. There are a few more archives on here that are not even worth a mention. It's a big shame that the last Vark offering is so boring since, in the past, the man has been responsible for plenty of really good compilations.



HDPlayer from the Vark 15 collection allows you to play .WAV or .IFF sound samples.



HD-Examine lets you have a good look at you hard disk but definitely not one for Amiga novices.

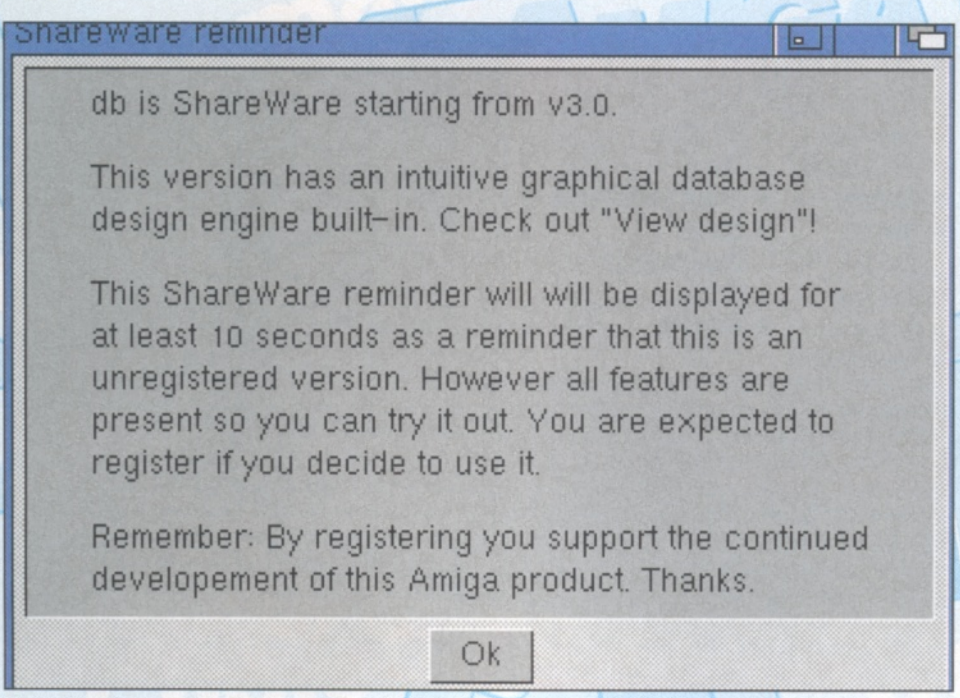
Verdict: 65%

Aminet**Choice**

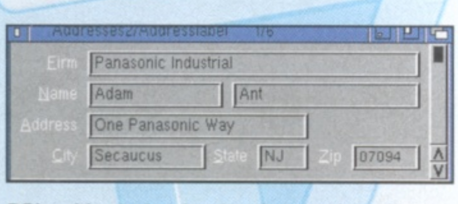
DB3.3

It won't be long before we start getting Databases called 'YAD' (Yet another Database) because there seems to be a plethora of them at the moment. DB3.3 is a rather nifty Shareware offering that I've been using earlier versions of for the past year or so. I have a fair amount of data stored (nearly 2000 items) so I can tell you for sure that DB is very stable and it has never crashed with me. DB used to be Freeware but V3 is now Shareware. The only restriction though is a nag screen that lasts for 10 or so seconds each time you load up.

There are some very good example databases included in the package which show just how flexible DB is. There isn't much you can't do as far as flat file databases are



DB3.3 has a reasonable nag screen, it means you can use the program to its full potential, but it's just annoying enough to make you want to part with the money to get rid of it and support the author.



DB's address view is a handy way of masking unwanted data.

concerned. The easiest and quickest way to get your own customised database up and running is to load an example in and edit it to your requirements, using the built in editor. You can drag the input boxes to the size and position you want and then rename the fields. A little more work is needed on this editor but you can also edit the file in your text editor if you prefer. The AmigaGuide docs explain everything clearly.

DB supports three different 'views' of your database. You can opt for 'Address label' which is great for printing address labels, but you will have to save out the data and print from somewhere else. 'Phone' allows you to just see names and phone numbers and 'Main' where all data is displayed. These views are more useful once you start using DB seriously.

There are all the usual options such as 'delete', 'cut', 'paste', 'Find', 'Sort' etc. DB will also 'dial' a phone number from the current field for you if you have your phone hooked up to your Amiga. DB can save your data in five different ways, in DB format of course, Tab separated ASCII, Comma separated ASCII, View and View with names.

There is also a very useful 'Browse' feature which gives a list view of data that you can just click on to go to that record. But the icing on the cake is ARexx support, including some useful examples.

The only negative points I can find are the lack of a print option, and the 'find' function only seems to search the first word in each field.

Apart from that, this is a superb database that deserves to do well.

Verdict: 90% Star buy

EasyCalc 2

Feeling lucky punk? I do, and I will tell you why. Browsing the Aminet one weekend I stumbled in my usual incompetent way into the wrong directory. Somehow I ended up in the 'biz/misc' dir so, while there, I thought I'd best check out what was on offer – just in case. No sooner had I started to scan the long list of goodies when a certain archive seemed to jump out and say 'hey look at me'. Call me psychic, but I downloaded this archive on the fly and boy are you glad I did. OK, some may say a spreadsheet doesn't sound that exciting, and you would be right. Most of the PD/Shareware Spreadsheets are archaic, poorly documented and unstable, but not EasyCalc 2.

This baby has the lot; proper on-line help, a good tutorial, example files, an easy to use interface, pull down menus, ARexx support and tooltypes and that's before you take a look at the impressive program features. As many windows open as memory permits, password protection if required, print part or all of your spreadsheet, with/out grid, comments, and other printer features set to your whim.

All the usual, cut, copy, paste, fill and a neat undo feature, import DBase (.DBF) database files, export in four different file formats for use in other programs, full clipboard support, search, autosave, macros, bookmarks, set screen modes with internal requester, full graphing capabilities with 10 different graph styles on offer, and I could continue, but I am sure you are getting the general idea that Easy Calc is one heck of a program.

This is what I call dream software, it has everything, is easy to use, plenty of help and examples, professionally produced and best of all it is free-ish. The author requires a measly, £15 to register. This unregistered version has all features enabled but the odd requester bugs you from time to time reminding you to register.

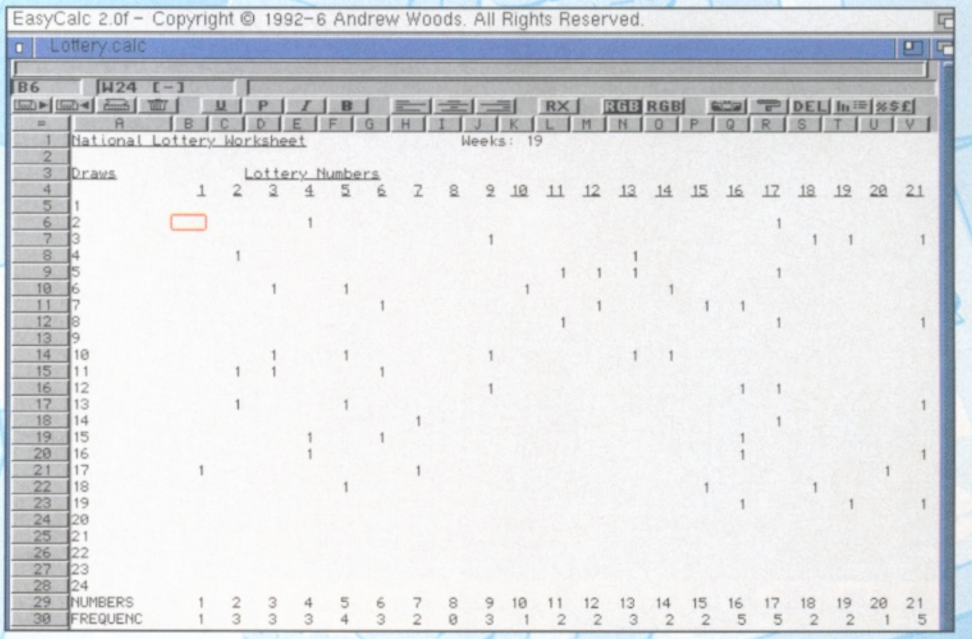
To be honest I cannot believe that anyone with a conscience could use this program regularly without wanting to reward the author. If you are one of these people then shame on you, sell your grandma, you obviously have no morals anyway. This is one excellent piece of software and I won't have a word said against it.

Verdict: 98% Star buy

GRn 2.1

This utility has been around for a while and to be honest I haven't previously paid it any attention,

40



An example of the versatility of spreadsheets. A lottery database with all the calculations done for you.

however I decided to take a look at news reading programs recently as there doesn't seem to be much on offer that appear all that impressive.

Last issue I reviewed MNews and that was quite good but I failed to find anything else of interest except this one called 'GRn'. It's an offline newsreader, which means, unlike MNews, you don't have to be connected to the Net while you read the messages.

However GRn doesn't actually download the news for you – you will need something like TIN set up to grab the news articles when you connect up to the Net. All GRn does is supply a decent front-end to read the news articles and post/reply articles to the newsgroups. It's easy and simple to use and knocks the socks off of TIN's news reading front-end.

As I hinted this is quite an old program but I don't think there are many better ones around at the moment. The Amiga news reading scene still has a way to go before I can get too excited about the software on offer.

Verdict: 85%



Amiga Assist V3.1 offers plenty of subjects in an easy to use environment.

NewsGroupEd

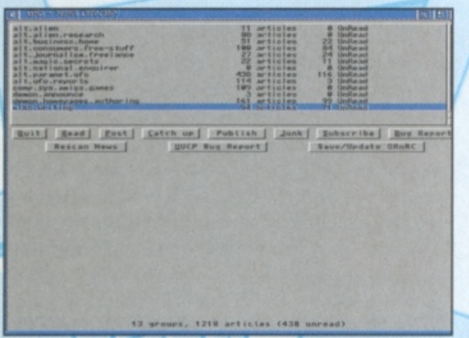
While we are on the subject of newsreaders and more specifically, TIN, the newsreader supplied with AmiTCP, there is a neat little program called NewsGroupED that does a very simple job that TIN should do, but doesn't. NewsGroupEd allows you to subscribe and unsubscribe to Newsgroups with a click of the mouse. In TIN you have to start messing with config files and there appears to be no



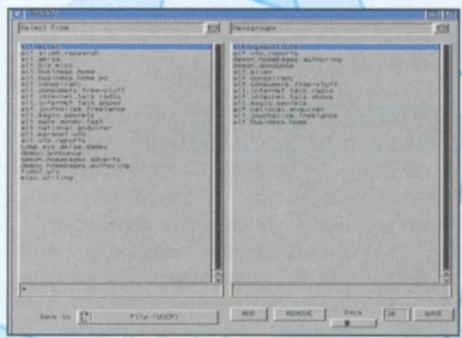
The author seems to be a bit confused about POP's and ISP's?

documentations on exactly what you are supposed to do, most beginners muddle through somehow, but it shouldn't be this way. Obviously the author of NewsGroupEd agrees with me on that score. NewsGroupEd even supports Thor configurations. A simple, but very useful utility to make life that bit more pleasant.

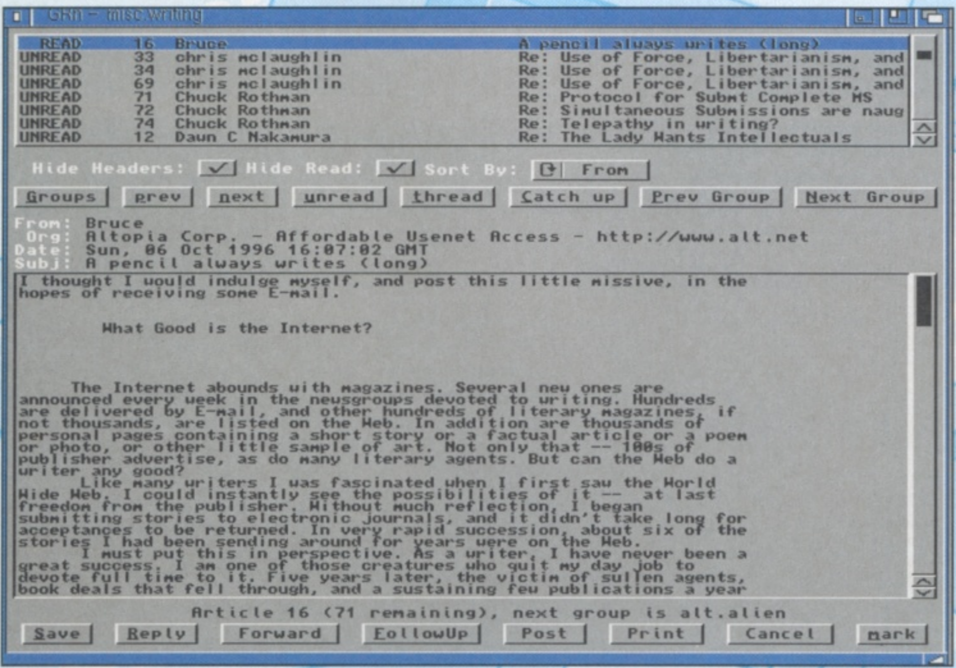
Verdict: 89%



GRn is an offline newsreader which means you don't have to be connected to the Net.



NewsGroupEd supplies an easy to use front-end for subscribing/unsubscribingto Newsgroups.



GRn gives you a much more comfortable way of reading News articles.

Licenceware**Choice**

Amiga Assist 3.1

This is a reference work for Workbench 2 and 3 beginners. It covers quite a few useful topics like AmigaDos, CD-Rom, Memory, Hard drive, Monitor, Internet, Amiga Models, AmigaDos, Workbench etc. No one subject is dealt with in particular depth because of the variety covered, in other words you won't become a master of Workbench or AmigaDos by just reading this disk, however it will give you a good grounding on the basics. Most of the text is well written and researched and there is the odd picture and diagram to illustrate important points. There is also a rather good A-Z of terms. Amiga Assist is very easy to use and will help total beginners no-end. Good value for money. ■

Verdict: 88%

PD submissions

If you have some exciting PD disks that you would like to be considered for review in Domain Choice, send them in to Amiga Shopper, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, clearly marked as a PD submission. We welcome any type of disk, except games.

If you are a PD house, make sure you include all the information necessary, such as how to contact you, how much the disks cost and how people can pay. If you are the author of the program, state where people can get your program from, and whether you would like us to consider it for inclusion on a future ShopperChoice Coverdisk.

HTML Tutorial Part 1

Welcome to the first of a two parter on HTML that goes a bit beyond the basics.

This month we will be dealing with traditional HTML tags, but looking more at so-called NetScapisms. We will also be looking at how to optimise your HTML editing environment and how to get around the fact that although you don't have a PC, you will want to know that your page looks alright on Microsoft Internet Explorer or NetScape.

For this tutorial I will be mainly concentrating on the use of IBrowse, AmFTP and Turbotext 2, although your choice of text editor will be equally valid as long as it supports ARexx, can be placed on a public screen and, preferably, can have menus added to it.

So let's start with the organisation of your setup. Turbotext is a great piece of software in my opinion and one of the reasons for this is that you can have many different setups for it. For our purposes in editing HTML we will turn off wordwrap and place the window at the bottom of our IBrowse screen at maximum width, to give us the fullest possible view of our code, without taking up too much space.

To do this we will start IBrowse first. Assuming you are running on a 256-colour screen in PAL Hi-Res Laced, DBLPal Hi-Res No Flicker or a higher resolution, we will next start up Turbotext. TTX starts, by default on the Workbench screen, but if you go to the Prefs menu and choose "Change..." then you will be able to put ttx onto IBrowse's screen. Now resize the ttx window so that it is about twelve text lines high and the full width of the screen, even if you are running on a 1024x768 screen or the like. Lastly, turn off word wrap, either through the preferences or by hitting CTRL-W. Now choose "Save Prefs as..." from the Prefs menu and call the prefs file something obvious like "www.prf".

> "I can already hear gulps all round the country but this really is very **easy**."

Our next step is to be able to call Turbotext from IBrowse, in order to save us a lot of time faffing around going back to Workbench, loading the prefs file and so on. Since you can call ttx from the shell and specify several parameters, we know this isn't going to be much of a problem. All we need do is make an ARexx script. I can already hear gulps around the country, but really this is very easy. Even my granny could do it (although she's not a very fast typist). All you have to remember is that every ARexx script starts with a comment enclosed in these: **/*comment*/**. You should have a line that reads "Options results", and then all you need is the ARexx script itself. As you can probably tell, I'm no expert at ARexx, but fortunately the only ARexx command you need to know is: "address command". This allows you to put in an AmigaDOS command as your next line, enclosed in single quotes. **Listing One** shows how the script will run for our purposes.

Listing One

```
/*call turbotext from iBrowse*/
Options results
address command 'Turbotext:ttx settings="turbotext:support/www.prf"'
```

That's it, that's all. Easy huh? Anyway, if you save this script as getttx.ibrx in your Rexx: directory. Now go to the General Settings in IBrowse's prefs menu and click on the Rexx tab. Add a new macro which we will call, for the sake of argument, "Call Turbotext". Click on the file selector icon and choose the getttx.ibrx script from the Rexx: directory. Now you can hit OK and save settings for IBrowse. This script also has the fortuitous side effect of stopping the alert beep if you use Magic Menu and swipe over the ARexx menu – which can only be a good thing.

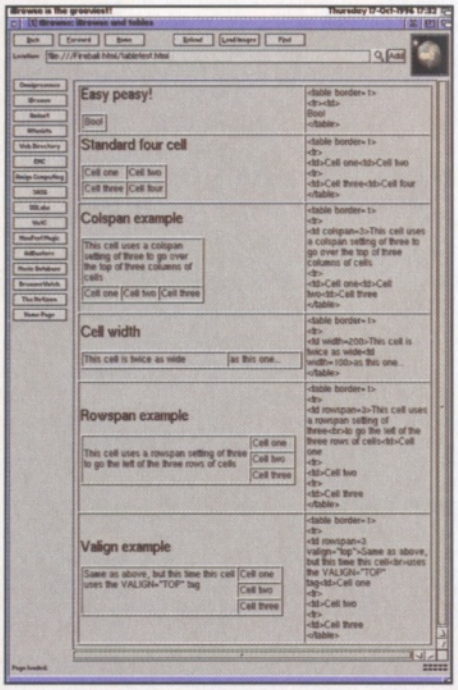
Now, if you keep all your HTML code in one place this script can cause a bit of a problem in that you will need to change directory every time you start ttx in order to get to your HTML directory. However, there is a solution. **Listing Two** shows you how to make an AmigaDOS script that calls ttx, and you save it as c:ttxwww with the script bit set, you can replace the last line in the ARexx script with:

'execute C:ttxwww'

Now when you choose the "Call Turbotext" menu item in IBrowse, your copy of Turbotext will start up and already be in the correct directory for editing HTML.

Listing Two

```
cd Fireball:html turbotext:ttx settings="turbotext:support/www.prf"
```



Tables are the best way of ensuring your page looks how you want it to. Now all we need is a browser that supports all the table tags...

Listing Three

```
turbotext:ttx settings="turbotext:support/www.prf" definitions="turbotext:support/TTX_www.dfn
```

OK, so now we have IBrowse and ttx set up to be an HTML engine. When you are editing your files offline, it might be worth having ttx automatically update your IBrowse page when you save files. This again is an ARexx script, but fortunately another very simple one. It will also introduce the idea of adding new menu items to ttx, something that I had thought a bit scary, but now do all the time. If you aren't using ttx at this point, you might want to skip a bit, but I'm sure the techniques will be the same. First though, we need our script. IBrowse only has a very limited ARexx command set, but one command it does have is reload. You can make a script that looks like this:

```
/*ARexx script for updating ibrowse*/
savefile
address IBrowse
OPTIONS RESULTS
reload 1
```

The first line of the script is the comment, as usual, the second line saves the ttx file and the remainder talks to IBrowse and tells it to reload the file that is currently being shown, which presumably will be the one you are working on.

To make this script easier to access, I edited the ttx definition file which is a large text file that creates ttx's menus when the program starts, amongst other things. The file I edited was TTX_Startup.dfn, but saved as TTX_www.dfn. I added a new menu item in the Project menu called Save and Update and used the keyboard shortcut from one of the undo functions, Rt. Amiga-z, so that I could access it from the keyboard like so:

```
ITEM "Save & Update"    "Z"
ExecARexxMacro Turbotext:rexx/update.ttrx
```

Now the ARexx script or AmigaDOS script needs updating once more to load ttx with this new definition file. **Listing Three** shows how the line should read now.

Make life easier

We have now come as far as non-ARexx bods can go. I do have another couple of scripts to make things even easier, but you'll need to wait for next month's Coverdisk to get them. The first, written for me by Michael Battilana, author of Personal Paint and head honcho at Cloanto, is a script that brings up a file requester and lets you choose a picture file (either Jpeg, Gif or gif anim). It then puts in all the HTML necessary for calling up this picture, including width and height tags. My other script is written by Amiga Format top dog, Nick Veitch, and sends your file to the Web server and updates IBrowse, all without you having to do a thing... but as I say, you'll have to wait until next month to get these.

Incidentally, the current version of AmFTP (1.65), has a very complete ARexx command set, that means that you can also call it from IBrowse in much the same way you called ttx. If you set AmFTP to use the same screen as IBrowse you will have the added advantage of having all three programs on the same screen, as well as taking up no more valuable chip RAM.

Now that we've got organisation out of the way, we can get onto the tricky business of making your pages look good. The number one problem that faces anyone doing HTML is that it doesn't really offer enough control over page layout. What looks great centred on your 640 x 512 screen will look really rough on a wider or narrower screen. Is there a way around this? Yes, the solution lies in using tables.

Tables aren't supported by all Amiga browsers; certainly the AWeb demo and Voyager can't handle them, and if you just want to support those browsers then you may as well skip down, but it'd be a shame to spoil a potentially good-looking site for the sake of a piece of software. So again we'll concentrate on using IBrowse.

Unlike most HTML tags, tables can be quite hard to visualise. You will have to make them a row at a time, even if your table is more vertical than horizontal. A table consists of four tags with several attributes. These tags are:

<table> (and the end tag </table>) opens a table
<th> a table header which often shows up in bold
<tr> indicating a new row
<td> shows a new cell on a row

You can supplement the last three with appropriate end tags, but it isn't necessary since a new <td> will indicate the end of the last one. There is a set of attributes which can be assigned to these tags and the most important ones are shown in **Table One**.

Table 1

FOR THE <TABLE> TAG:
BORDER: If this is set to more than 0 your table with have visible borders for its cells of increasing width
WIDTH: This indicates a horizontal measurement in pixels. This is one of the most important ways of controlling the look of your page.
FOR THE <TD> TAG:
COLSPAN: This allows you to create a cell that spans two or more columns
ROWSPAN: The same as above, but this time for rows
WIDTH: size in pixels of the cell
ALIGN: specifies how text should be aligned in the cell
VALIGN: specifies how text should be aligned vertically in the cell

I haven't put any attributes for the <tr> element because in my experience they don't tend to show up in IBrowse.

Tables

Tables are great, if you can't quite get the layout you were after with one table, add another around the outside of it and try again, but beware of the complexity this introduces. I always find it easier if I have a border on the table so I can see what's going on – I can always turn the border off later.

Text in a table defaults to being left justified. A <center> tag means it looks as good on a narrow screen as it does on a wide one. Give the table a width so that it doesn't spread out and voila! You have a page that looks good on any sized screen. People who don't have a wide enough screen for your table will still have to scroll left and right, but at least they'll see the same layout as everyone else. ■



As you can see here, on the Amiga Shopper Web pages, FutureNet uses tables all over the place, so that means that they really must be good!

CanDo part 7



Can CanDo really support Full Motion Video played back from disk? **John Kennedy** *seems to think so...*

As a fan of multimedia, I've mentioned before the subject of CanDo and animations. CanDo is pretty neat when it comes to moving graphics around the screen, but has several limitations. First of all, it can only deal with AnimBrushes and not pure ANIM files. Obviously this isn't a real handicap as it's a straightforward job to convert one to the other.

The big problem though is that animations must be loaded into memory before playing: they cannot be spooled from hard disk or CD-ROM. In an age of multimedia, this is a rather serious problem and is probably a consequence of CanDo's ability to manage multiple animations and trigger actions to individual frames. Even the Animation Manager – a separate CLI utility program included as part of CanDo specifically to replay full-screen animations – cannot cope. Nevertheless, it's a shame that CanDo can't make the most of large animations. There is a way around this limitation, although it's not particularly elegant. CanDo can trigger any other Amiga CLI program from within a script, and there is no reason why this problem can't be a utility which can spool animations.

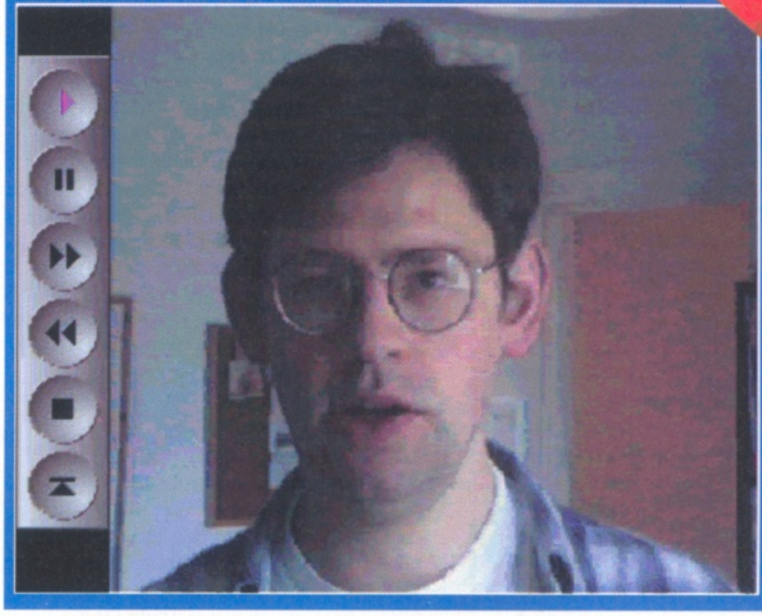
I've been up to my elbows in Public Domain animation players, and here's a short list of those which can play animations without first having to load them all into memory: Viewtek, BigAnim, HDAnim and RTap. There may be more, but these are the most common. Of them all, only RTap is suitable. Although the others are great (Viewtek and BigAnim in particular are good because they support the excellent ANIM7 standard) they lack the ability to play an animation only once. Rather irritatingly, the others will all loop an animation indefinitely and this is useless in a multimedia presentation.

The snag is that all the animation players insist on opening their own, brand new screen. The ultimate Amiga animation utility would support Public (i.e. shared) screens, spool animations from disk and have a full ARexx port, but sadly it doesn't exist.

However, here's how to give the impression of playing back an animation from disk from within CanDo. The point of this project is to create a multimedia system which allows the user to select from two video clips. The clips are too large to be loaded into memory, so they must be spooled from hard disk. It will also be possible to spool them from CD-ROM if you are lucky enough to have a CD-ROM burner. The animations are stored in low-resolution HAM format, as this gives a reasonable range of colours and yet will play back very quickly. On my A4000 the animation is replayed from hard drive practically at the original speed at which it was recorded, that is 25 frames a second. Slower systems (030 and/or CD-ROM based) will obviously play back slightly slower. HAM8 mode would give even clearer pictures, and is worth investigating.



The animation was created, I'm sad to say, on a PC system using a real-time MJPEG encoding system. It was then converted into an AVI file, sent over Ethernet to the Amiga, loaded in Main Actor and saved as a HAM animation file. This took less than ten minutes in total.

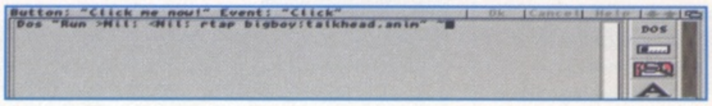


The animation is completely separate from the static display: it just happens to use the same screen mode, same palette and have the same control panel down the side.

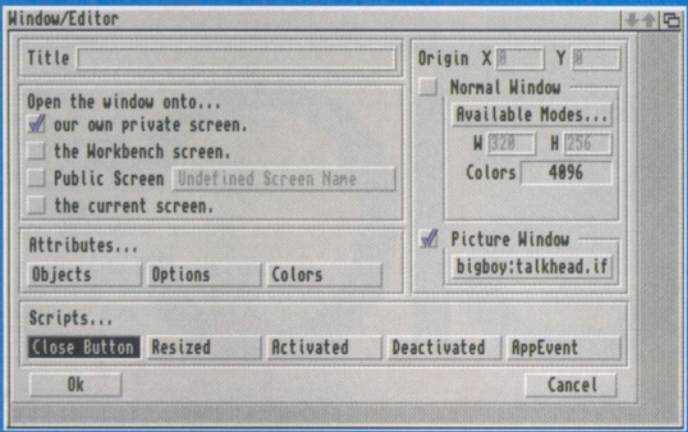
In Control

The first step was to create a smart looking control panel. One of the advantages of using HAM mode is that there are a lot of colours available: it's easy to make excellent buttons using the shaded fill options of Deluxe Paint. To make sure all the colour were right, I loaded in the first frame of the long animation to set the palette values.

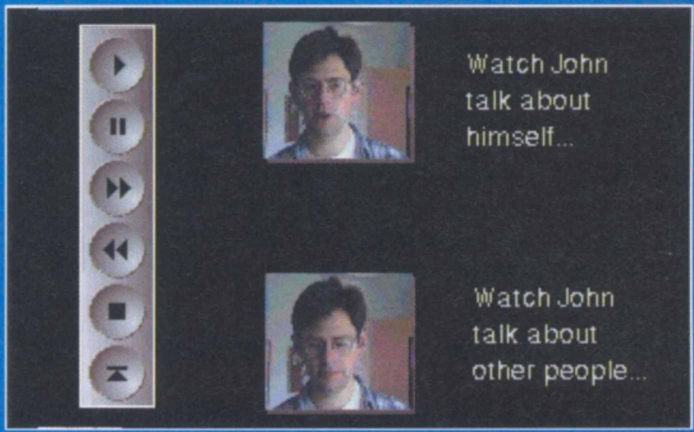
Now we're going to use this control panel to give the illusion of a fully integrated animation replay system. Not only will the control panel appear on the main (and static) CanDo display, but we'll also superimpose it on top of the animation itself. Deluxe Paint will do this very easily: cut out the panel, paste it on the first frame of the animation. Then use the MOVE requester to paste it into the subsequent frames, making sure it's perfectly aligned with the panel in the static display. I found it best to have the animation loaded, and then jump (press J) to the spare screen to build the static display. Now



Select the script which is execute on "click" and use the DOS tool to select the RTap command.



Define the properties of the deck. Use the static display as the main deck illustration and switch off all borders and gadgets.



The static display allows the user to select exactly which animation they wish to see.

save both the new animation, and the static display and load CanDo.

Getting Started

The first thing to do is define the properties of the deck. Use the static display as the main deck illustration and switch off all borders and gadgets. This will ensure that both the screen mode and the palette are set up properly: we want to minimise the impact of starting the animation playing as much as possible.

Now define a button to appear on screen. This will trigger the animation. You can see that I've already created a button of sorts using an image from the animation scaled down. Use the AREA button type to make the image a "hot spot" and switch off borders. Now we can define the script used to play back the animation.

Assuming you've already downloaded RTap from Aminet or obtained it from a Public Domain library, the next stage is simple. Select the script which is executed on "click" and use the DOS tool on the right hand side of the screen to select the RTap command. You'll need to edit the code produced to include the filename of the animation: in this case it's "talkhead.anim".

If you have a soundtrack, for example a sound sample to accompany the animation, you'll also need to include the CanDo commands necessary to trigger it. I'm assuming here that the sound sample is small enough to fit into memory: if not, you're in trouble and you'll need to find a third party animation program which can also spool sound samples from disk...

The best way to include the sound sample is to use the LoadSound command early on: preferably before the button has even been pressed. If there are a lot of samples, this won't be possible. Loading it before the button is pressed will avoid a delay between the user hitting the button and something happening: if this is too long, you'll need to flash up a "please wait" or other action. If you don't, the user may think their action has been ignored. It's important to always make feedback as instantaneous as possible.

Use LoadSound, and then PlaySound. However use the WAIT keyword to pause the sound. This allows you to load several sounds: for example, a narration and a music sound track. Once the command has been given to start the animation playback, the Audio On command will release both sound effects. If you need to ensure the sound and video are in "sync", you'll need to do a lot of experimenting. As the animation playback is no longer under the control of CanDo, it's not possible to trigger certain sounds on certain frames.



Repeat the process for the second and any subsequent animations, and you are finished. I find that because the control panel is visible in both the static and animated displays, the user is totally unaware that a separate program is being used to display them.

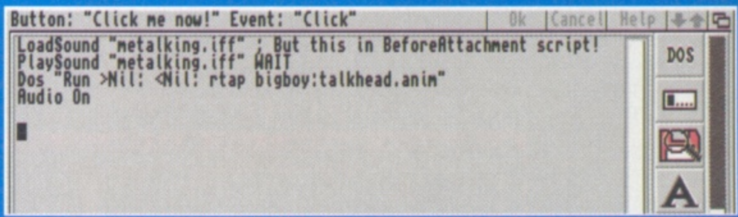
The use of the same screen mode and colours means that there is no noticeable jump from one display to another.

There are various extra touches you can incorporate. For example, you might notice that the play button is illuminated in the animation display. You may wish to ghost out the other controls, because clicking with the mouse on them won't actually do anything: remember, only CanDo will react to the user's input.

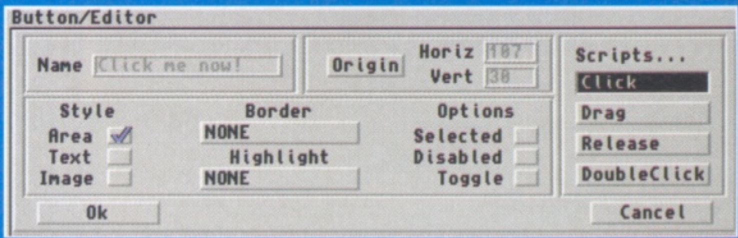
Another touch of class would be to introduce the animation gently, by fading it in, or using a wrap or spin effect: all these can be achieved by DPaint and saved as part of the long animation itself. They'll add a great deal to the professional appearance of the final project.

I hope you've seen how a limitation of CanDo can be worked around, using some easily available PD utilities. It has to be said that the lack of spooling animations – and sound – from disk is a major omission, but not fatal. Although the solution presented here doesn't deal with sound with any degree of accuracy, there is hope. The CDXL format looks as though it might be making a welcome comeback, thanks to the wish of ex-Commodore employee Carl Sassenrath to release the necessary tools. CDXL was designed to replay video and sound directly from CD-ROM, and it's the perfect answer for multimedia fans. With the prevalence of CD-ROM and hard drives, its appearance is well overdue and perhaps in the not-to-distant future we'll take a detailed look at it and how it can be utilised by CanDo and the multimedia author. ■

Once the command has been given to start the anim, the Audio On command will release both sound effects.



Use the AREA button type to make the image a "hot spot" and switch off borders.



Blitz BASIC Part 2

*More Blitz Basic help this month as **Paul Overaa** looks at some of Blitz's list handling commands and explains how they can be used to search Exec's own linked-list arrangements...*

Exec, as most of you will know, uses lists containing embedded pointers. These store virtually everything it has to deal with and do it using a small set of standard list handling functions. Routines exist for adding, deleting, finding elements and for inserting and using elements according to various orders and priorities.

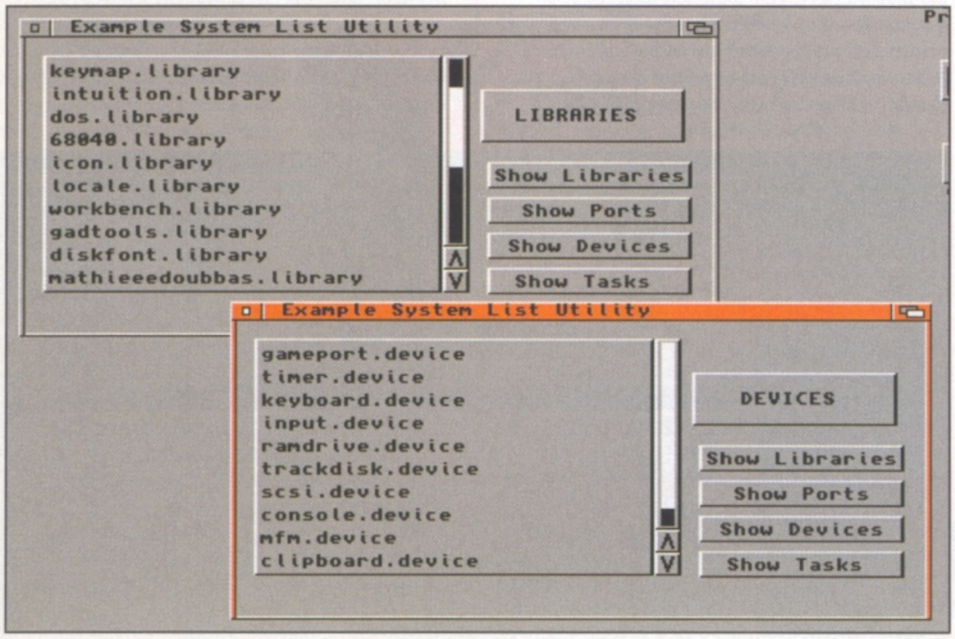
Once you understand the format you can, in fact, use the same routines in your own programs although, with Blitz Basic, it's rarely necessary to use the underlying Exec routines directly because, as mentioned last month, the language provides a range of high-level functions for list creation and manipulation. You can for example, use Blitz's list operations for searching things like the Amiga's internal system lists – although in order to do this it's necessary to know a little about the way such lists are constructed.

The fundamental building block of an Exec system list is a structure called a Node and conceptually this is divided into three parts: Firstly there are two pointers used to hold information about the next item in the list and the previous item – the lists are always doubly-linked, i.e. they contain both forward looking and backward looking pointers.

Following this comes some internal node information which consists of a type field, a 'priority' field, and a pointer to a node name and after this comes the real data associated with the node (which can be absolutely anything). As a Blitz NewType definition a Node has this sort of structure...

```
NEWTYPE.Node
    *ln_Succ.Node ;pointer to previous
item
    *ln_Pred.Node ;pointer to next item
    ln_Type.b     ;node ID type
    ln_Pri.b      ;node priority
    *ln_Name.b    ;node priority
End NEWTYPE
```

Type, priority and name fields are used primarily for Exec-based, system list, purposes and on the occasions when these fields are not needed Exec also recognises a smaller structure called a MinNode which just stores linkage information...



This month's example program can be extended to allow other Amiga system lists to be examined.

Listing One

```
NEWTYPE.List
    *lh_Head.Node     ; pointer to first node
    *lh_Tail.Node
    *lh_TailPred.Node ;last node in list
    lh_Type.b
    lh_pad.b
End NEWTYPE

NEWTYPE.MinList
    *lh_Head.Node     ; pointer to first node
    *lh_Tail.Node
    *lh_TailPred.Node ;last node in list
End NEWTYPE
```

● **Listing One: Blitz NewType definitions of the standard exec list header structures**

```
NEWTYPE.MinNode
    *ln_Succ.Node ;pointer to previous
item
    *ln_Pred.Node ;pointer to next item
End NEWTYPE
```

Exec's list functions, incidentally, all work just on the fields present in the Node, or MinNode, structure itself. This means that, providing one of these structures are made the first part of whatever data is being worked on, the standard Exec node routines can be used to manipulate the whole data block as a single unit – you pass the list routine a pointer to the structure and, using those initial node fields, Exec will be able to perform any required list-handling operations.

List Headers

Each Exec list is given a special info block or 'header'. As with nodes themselves two types of headers are available (see **Listing One**) depending on whether or not list identification details need to be stored. The lh_Head, lh_Tail and lh_TailPred fields have the same meanings in each structure: lh_Head points to the first node in the list, lh_Tail is always NULL, and lh_TailPred (tail predecessor) points to the last real node of the list. Within the List structure the lh_Type field is used to store information about the type of nodes stored in a list and several types are defined in the exec/types include file. The lh_Pad field is not used as such but is present to extend the structure to an even

Listing Two

```
Statement LoadList{*current_node.Node}
SHARED m()
While *current_node\ln_Succ
d=AddItem(m())
  m()\text=Peek$(*current_node\ln_Name)
  *current_node=*current_node\ln_Succ
Wend
End Statement
```

● **Listing Two: Given the first node of a system list, this routine will create a separate Blitz list containing the node names.**

number of bytes (to avoid the possibility of addressing errors occurring on 68000 processor based machines). One important point to bear in mind when using Exec lists incidentally is that when you see a pointer to an Exec list – you are looking, not at the first node in the list, but at the list header!

Some Example Code

The pointer arrangements used in Exec list headers and nodes are efficient, but they are also confusing the first time they are encountered and the best way to come to terms with them is to see typical working code. I've chosen a small utility that allows you to view a number of Exec system lists using a ListView gadget similar to that discussed last month.

Accessing a system list is not particularly difficult. Exec does, for example, maintain a list of all the libraries that are currently in use and holds a pointer to this list's header in the LibList field of the ExecBase structure. The address of ExecBase can be found by looking at memory location $4 and since, by convention, this location is labelled AbsExecBase we could therefore find the start of the library list using this sort of code...

```
*exec.ExecBase=Peek.l(AbsExecBase)
*system_list.List=*exec\LibList
```

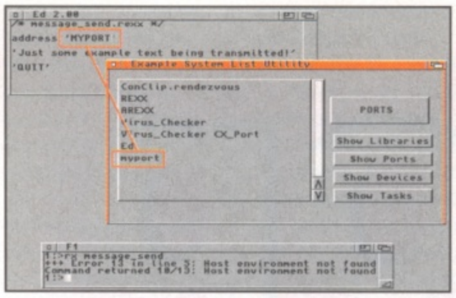
At this point the address of the first node in the library list would then be present in the list header's lh_Head field, i.e. in `*system_list\lh_Head`, and by setting up a node pointer using a statement such as...

```
*current_node=*system_list\lh_Head
```

we'd then be in a position to start searching through the list. Most programmers, by the way, would not set up an explicit list header variable but would directly assign the node pointer in one step, namely...

```
*current_node=*exec\LibList\lh_head
```

Either way however, once the node pointer is available, it then becomes possible to step



The example program's public ports listing could prove useful when trying to identify ARexx port names!

through the library list using the contents of successive ln_Succ fields via a loop like this...

```
While *current_node\ln_Succ
    ;DO SOMETHING WITH CURRENT NODE!
*current_node=*current_node\ln_Succ
Wend
```

In short the loop continues examining nodes until there are no more nodes left (when the ln_Succ pointer then becomes zero). **Listing Two** shows a Blitz routine called LoadList() that uses this framework to read the names associated with a system list and place them in a separate Blitz-style list created using the AddItem() function. In the example program that you'll find on the Coverdisk I've arranged for library, port, device and task waiting lists to be displayed. The task waiting list incidentally, which Exec uses to hold details of those tasks that are ready to run and are waiting to be given some processor time, is constantly being updated so you'll find that the order of various items in this list may change each time you select the Show Tasks gadget.

Event Handling Code

The ListView arrangements are basically the same as those used and explained last month although a little extra code has been needed to handle list changing. Blitz's GTButton statements provide four additional gadgets (see **Listing Three**) and their use is detected by using a GadgetHit statement coupled with a main event loop that uses this framework...

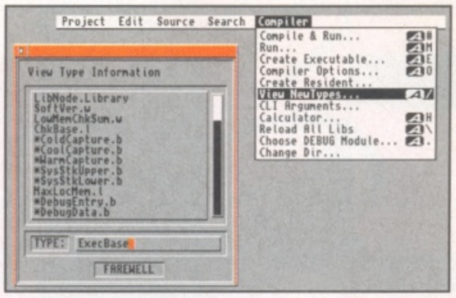
```
While NOT (idcmp_event.l=#IDCMP_CLOSEW INDOW)
    idcmp_event=WaitEvent
    Select idcmp_event
        Case #IDCMP_GADGETUP
        Select GadgetHit
            ;SEPARATE LIBRARY,PORT AND
            ;DEVICE GADGET CASE ACTIONS
            End Select
    End Select
Wend
```

For this particular application the only events we are interested in detecting are the `#IDCMP_CLOSEWINDOW`, which occurs when a user hits the window's close gadget, and the `#IDCMP_GADGETUP` messages which arrive as gadgets are selected. Each time a button gadget event is detected the node names from the appropriate system list have to be loaded into

Listing Three

```
#B1_ID=1
#B1_W=120
#B1_H=15
#B1_X=270
#B1_Y=70
B1_TEXT$="Show Libraries"
B1_TITLE$=" LIBRARIES"
GTButton 1,#B1_ID,#B1_X,#B1_Y,#B1_W,#B1_H,B1_TEXT$,0
```

● **Listing Three: All four button gadgets are generated using these type of constant definitions coupled to a GT Button statement.**



Blitz's View NewTypes facilities make it easy to check the fields present in an Amiga system structure.

the Blitz list m() that is used with the ListView gadget. This involves firstly using a GTChangeList statement to isolate the list (since it is an underlying Gadtool library requirement that any list currently attached to a ListView gadget must be detached from the gadget before list alterations are made).

Once detached a ClearList statement is then used to empty the names list and immediately after this the names from the new system list are copied using the LoadList{} routine and the list re-attached to the ListView gadget. A small DisplayTitle{} routine is then used to provide visible indication of the list being viewed by printing a text string into a gadtool box created using Blitz's GTBevelBox command (see **Listing Four**). The following fragment shows the general pattern used for all the case select statements in the example code...

```
Case #B1_ID ;Show libraries
GTChangeList 1,#LV_ID
ClearList m()
LoadList{*exec\LibList\lh_Head}
GTChangeList 1,#LV_ID,m()
DisplayTitle{B1_TITLE$}
```

The only differences between the individual case statements of course are in the LoadList{} and DisplayTitle{} areas where we are selecting which list to look at. And that, as far as the example code is concerned, is pretty much all there is to it.

And To Finish...

You'll find the source code on the Coverdisk as the file lists.txt with 'lists' being the equivalent Workbench executable version. Those of you, incidentally, who are into ARexx coding may like to know that the ports list which Exec maintains will include all public ports including ARexx message ports. So, if you ever get a 'Host environment not found' script error and need to check an ARexx port name spelling, its upper/lower case style, or whether in fact the port in question exists at all, then the Exec ports list will be just the place to look! ■

Listing Four

```
Statement DisplayTitle{x$}
WLocate
#GADGET_MSG_X,#GADGET_MSG_Y
Print x$
End Statement
```

● **Listing Four: This short routine is used to identify a selected list.**

Talking shop

This month we see a resurgence in positive letters, which makes a welcome change and raises some fair points. **David Taylor** *replies to your views.*

Thankfully this month we haven't received the usual "Print this if you dare" letters, with the exception of one odd bloke who continually emailed me about the fact he didn't have Installer – a problem I had obviously personally manufactured to annoy him. Telling him where to get it for free didn't seem to help either. Still the letters have been much more realistic this month, which in itself is bound to set off another backlash. However, do keep writing in as we like to hear from all of you.

Chin Up

I am writing to you to highlight a problem that I and possibly other subscribers have found in the last few months. When the latest issue of Amiga Shopper arrived (AS68, November 1996), a letter was also delivered stating that my subscription had expired and that I would not be able to renew it. I do understand the reason behind this and buying the magazine from a newsagent would not be a problem.

The concern I have is about the Subscribers disk. As I have been a subscriber since Issue 2, I have every single issue including the coverdisks and all of the extra Subscribers disks. As my subscription has now expired, I will not be able to get these extra disks to keep the set complete. Although this may be a very small point, I would like to know if there will be any way to obtain these disks in the future.

On a slightly different point, over the last few months the majority of the letters published in Amiga Shopper have criticised the magazine, the lack of pages and the loss of one of the Coverdisks. I am also concerned about the magazine but we should remember that the underlying problem is the Amiga platform in general. After years of neglect by Commodore International and the Escom farce, the Amiga is all but dead, only kept alive by a small community of developers and users. Taking our frustration out on Amiga Shopper, Amiga Format and other Amiga publications does seem to be unfair and misdirected.

To be honest, I do not see any future for the Amiga except in VIScorp's TV set top box which would not be of any use as a computer to any developers or users. The Amiga might be revived in its own right with the development of a high powered replacement, but I cannot see this happening.

The best way to go would be to develop some kind of emulation for the PC or Apple Mac (or the BeBox as described on Amiga Format CD5 and in Mac Format issue 42). Whether it was software or preferably hardware emulation, this would give the Amiga platform a chance to advance in processor, graphics and hardware power in line with the host computer. Personally I would be happy to spend £450-£550 on an add-on card for the PC or Mac, which could run existing and future Amiga software and could use host computer resources: printers, CD-ROM drives, hard drives, etc.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to voice my questions and ideas. Hopefully this will spark some other ideas and maybe we can take the Amiga on to a brighter future. I hope Amiga Shopper will continue for some time to come as it has always been an excellent magazine. However, I do understand that there will come a time when it becomes impossible to continue publishing. Until then I will continue to read Amiga Shopper and Amiga Format.

Richard Ely
Basildon

I have to say that this is one of the most honest and lucid letters I've read for a while. You recognise the problems of the Amiga and the magazines and may well not be far off the mark when you say that the Amiga's future could well be sealed in a TV box. Unless something breaks the deadlock soon and a new computer emerges, I cannot see how VIScorp can get the Amiga back out. I'm not sure that the TV box won't still be useful as a computer, because they intimated that it would be just that, but until we see one, we don't know.

As you can see from this issue, there is already a software PC Amiga emulator, but it doesn't run as well as an original and cannot outperform one. The problem is that PCs cannot read Amiga disks under any circumstances which means that making a complete emulator is going to be hard unless software publishers also decide to release their Amiga software as files which the emulator can read. That's unlikely as the emulator isn't even an official development.

The problem of ex-subscribers who want to re-subscribe not being able to keep a complete set of disks has been troubling me, but I haven't managed to find a solution. Your letter has given me an idea, which although not ideal is the best I can come up with. I shall speak to Ben on Amiga Format and try to get the Amiga Shopper Subscribers disks placed onto the CD for you and people in your situation. It may be that we have to password protect them, in which case the password will be included with the AF newsletter. As you and most other AS readers subscribe to AF, it would mean that you'd always get the additional disk to compliment your copy of AS from the newsagent.

What Whingebags!

What a pity that so many of your readers have to continue to whinge on about the fact that Amiga Shopper no longer has as many pages as it used to have an that it has lost one of its Coverdisks – especially when you have very clearly, and more than adequately, explained your reasons why this state of affairs is so.

Obviously if the current Amiga market isn't too healthy and many people are moving onto other platforms then it stands to reason that readership levels of Amiga

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magazines are going to fall as a result and that in order for the magazines to continue to make a profit then something somewhere has to suffer. Unfortunately Amiga Shopper has been badly hit but that doesn't mean that it is still not worth £4.50. I personally think that the magazine is still excellent value for money and still offers the Amiga community a great deal as it always has done.

If people don't support the magazine now in times of crisis and simply abandon it then it will never pick up again and we will eventually lose it – and that would be a real shame. OK, we may not be getting as much now as we used to, but remember how much Amiga Shopper has given us over the years – it has given us a hell of a lot to be thankful for. So, all those given to moaning, why not cast your prejudices aside and take a good hard look at what still remains. Amiga Shopper is still a very good magazine and still has lots to offer. I believe that the staff are trying doubly hard to give us the very best they can under the present circumstances.

If we will only support Amiga Shopper then before long we may see the return of the second Coverdisk and a few more pages. If people maintain a negative attitude now and the Amiga market does happen to pick up again (it could happen) then we may have permanently lost one of the best Amiga magazines to be published.

Never at any time have I complained about the loss of pages or the second Coverdisk, but have accepted that such things are a (hopefully temporary) sign of the times. I for one will continue to support the magazine through thick and thin and I hope many others will also.

P Whitfield
Berwick upon Tweed

Well, at last we seem to be getting some sensible letters, don't we? You are quite right – should the circulation go up again then the magazine will too. The only way to do this is to order a copy from your newsagents.

Amiga Shopper has always tried to give the very best we can and will continue to do so. We recognise that, especially now, it is the only way we can reward your loyalty.

Moaning Minnies

I generally just live my life, taking things as they come and rarely complain. However, I have become incensed by the deluge of letters from moaning minnies who take it upon themselves to complain to the Amiga press about the price, number of pages and amount of Coverdisks on Amiga magazines, especially AS.

I can't help thinking the people who make these complaints have short memories. During the time I've been buying Amiga magazines I have made countless money saving decisions thanks to the reports carried in the form of reviews and tutorials.

I'm on a tight budget and the advice I've been given has enabled me to enjoy my Amiga to the full in whatever area I use it. Before I buy any hardware or software I always refer to the reviews in my magazines (of which I have compiled an index on my A1200). Not only do I now have a high spec A1200, but I have also built up a healthy collection of useful software and games. I now know how to use them confidently not only because I read the manuals, but also by following the tutorials.

I am at the moment following the CanDo tutorial carried in AS and other skills I have learned are 3D graphics, 2D graphics, DTV, DTP and animation. Now, even though I am already artistic with a lively imagination, these tutorials have not only broadened my skills, they have given me invaluable insights into the software.

The people who moan might consider how much they would have to spend on a college course for each skill, or how much they would have wasted on software with fancy packaging and glamourous advertising only to discover that the package was not all it was cracked up to be. I personally have neither the time nor money to go to college to learn only about PCs or Macs. I am either working or broadening my knowledge on the Amiga, appreciating the information and advice I get from magazines.

Perhaps these disgruntled people should buy an entry level PC (now 120MHz – what it will be in 12 months time nobody knows) and still have to buy additional hardware to allow it to be as flexible as the Amiga and even then operate in a less efficient way. Then they could buy software that needs configuration with ridiculous installation processes. Then perhaps they will learn, as other people who have deserted the Amiga for the glamourous world of the PC, that there is nothing that comes close to the Amiga for user friendliness and flexibility.

Now I must get back to reading my Amiga Shopper as I have lost enough time on people who should either appreciate what they are given or go away and find the not so green grass on the other side of the hill.

P Casson
Bristol



Tutorials on programs like CanDo mean readers can get the most out their software.

You are quite right that many of the skills learnt through magazines may well hold you in good stead in the future even from a professional stand point. I too believe that there is still a role for AS and that it still manages to pass on some important news that other magazines can't – last month's huge Art Effect article for instance. The PC is a very different world and those that think everything is cheaper over there – even the mags are, after all, should think again. The home software market on the PC is considered to range up to £1000. So do you have that sort of money for a program or do you want to fork out over £1000 for a piece of hardware to discover you can't afford to buy anything to run on it? I do understand that some people aren't happy with the state and price of AS, but believe me if they don't get you one way, they will get you another.

Come back

I am writing to you about your thin magazine. Like other magazines you have difficulties and you need to do something other than just charge more money. For example, you can use newspaper quality paper and print Amiga Answers and Talking Shop in black and white. Discontinue the Coverdisk and give a discount to subscribers. Give a discount on advertising and then add more news, interviews and more in-depth reviews.

Ruben Dalli
Malta

The trouble is, poorer quality paper doesn't make enough difference. To keep two disks we would have had to drop the page count to around 16. Dropping the Coverdisks altogether was not a possibility as we'd found out over a year earlier. People want a colour magazine with a disk and that means this one is the best compromise we can offer.

It's not possible to print only some pages in black and white, because of the way sections are bound; it still means that they go through a colour printer.

AS comprises of two sections so a whole section would have to be in black and white including some reviews which would look ugly and save little money. Discounting advertising would only worsen matters. As to in-depth reviews, I hope you enjoyed Art Effect.

Sayonara

I was glad to see the answers to my questions answered by two Amiga experts Mr Overaa and Mr Taylor. Thank you very much.

As Mr Taylor thought, I set my Locale to Spanish as I live here in Mexico City (speaking Spanish obviously) although I am Japanese. I have long suffered because the Amiga does not support 2-byte code letters (eg Kanjii). The fact is that sadly the Amiga can't do what the poor MS-DOS machines can.

There exists some software which manages Japanese but they are limited in use for not being genuine – no support for printers. Among them is DaiGoKai which is so good that I recommend Amiga Technologies contact the author – Mr Izawa of MicroSoftware Associates Japan if they want to expand the Amiga market seriously. Have they done so already? Hmmm, I doubt it.

Jiro Narita
Mexico City

Glad to have helped. Will the next Amiga be truly multi-lingual? It should be. If you get the CD version of issue 92 of our sister magazine Amiga Format, you'll find another Japanese language text editor called JIW which can edit in Kanji, Hiragana and Katakana. ■

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AMIGA SHOPPER

Issue 71



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Ram Boards

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A500+ 1Mb Ram Board w/o clock......£20.00
A600 1Mb Ram Board w/o clock £20.00
A600 1Mb Ram Board with clock £30.00
A1200 1Mb Ram Board with clock......£35.00
(limited stock)
A1200 4Mb Ram Board with clock......£65.00
A1200 8Mb Ram Board with clock......£90.00
FPU 33MHz £33.00

Controllers

AlfaPower Hard Drive controller A500 ...£99
AT-Bus Hard Drive controller A2000 ......£69
Oktagon 2008 SCSI controller £99
Multiface III £79
PCMCIA Controller for CDRom for A1200 £69

Spider

NEW MULTI I/O CARD
FOR AMIGA 1500/2000/4000
Active 8 port high speed serial card. Multiboard Support 57600 Baud rate on all channels simultaneously. **£299**

New AlfaQuatro

Specially made hardware and software. Allows 4 ATAPI devices, ie, 2 IDE hard disk & 2 IDE CD Rom to Amiga 4000 internal IDE controller, through Alfapower on Amiga 500/500+ and possibly Amiga 1200 comes, with full IDE Fix software **£59**

Connexion New Ethernet Card

FOR AMIGA 1500/2000/4000
Features:
- 10Mbit Ethernetcard for A2000/3000/4000
- 16 Bit-Zorro-Bus Design – gives highest transfer rates while minimizing CPU load **£185**

Speakers

Multi Media Speakers
25 watt (pmpo) £29.35
Multi Media Speakers
100 watt (pmpo) £39.95
Multi Media Speakers
240 watt (pmpo) £49.95
Multi Media Speakers
300 watt (pmpo)* £59.95
** 3D surround sound*

92% AUI



Floppy Drives

External Floppy Drive
for all Amigas £39.95
Internal Floppy Drive
A500/500+ £35.00



Internal Floppy Drive A600/1200+ ...£35.00
A-Grade Double Density box of 50 disks ...£13.00
including colourful labels

IDE Hard Drives

HARD DRIVES + AT-BUS CONTROLLER FOR AMIGA 500(+)/A1500/A2000/A3000/A4000
AT-Bus hard drive controller £69.00
Alfapower hard drive controller £99.00
Alfapower-540 540Mb
hard drive £199.00
Alfapower-850 850Mb
hard drive £219.00
Alfapower-1.0G 1.0Gig
hard drive £239.00
Alfapower-1.2G 1.2Gig
hard drive....................................£259.00



Memory for Alfapower-Plus (new) marked Alfapower-Plus
2Mb SIMMS £30.00
4Mb SIMMS £30.00
8MB SIMMS..£60.00
16MB SIMMS £90.00
Memory for Alfapower (old)
Every 2Mb Zip-Rams £89.95

IDE 2.5" Hard Drives

FOR AMIGA 600/1200
IDE-60 60Mb hard drive £55
IDE-120 120Mb hard drive £79
IDE-340 340Mb hard drive £120
IDE-540 540Mb hard drive £150

IDE 3.5" Hard Drives

FOR AMIGA 1200/4000
IDE-540 540Mb hard drive £129
IDE-840 840Mb hard drive £130
IDE-1.0G 1.0Gig hard drive £175
IDE-1.3G 1.3Gig hard drive £179
IDE-1.7G 1.7Gig hard drive £195
IDE-2.1G 2.1Gig hard drive £239

Miscellaneous Products

DD floppy disks (50)
including multicoloured disk labels £13.00
DD floppy disks (100)
including multicoloured disk labels £25.00
3.5" Hard Drive Kit for A600/1200
+ Install software £15.00
Colourful Mouse Mat
Animal Jungle design and Dinosaur design ...£5.00
Optical Mouse Mat £5.00
2 in 1 Scanner/Mouse Pad £9.95
Contoured Wrist Pad £5.50
Plain Wristrest £3.50
2Mb SIMMS £30.00
4Mb SIMMS £30.00

CD CLEANERS - 1/2 PRICE
CD Rom Cleaner £3.00
Automatic CD Rom Cleaner *(battery powered)* ...£10.00
Laser Lens Cleaner £4.50

Complete CD Rom for all Amigas

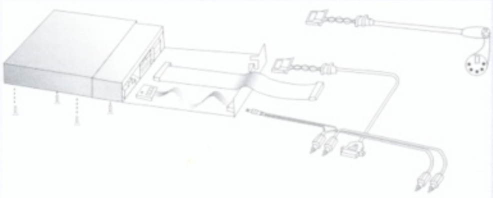
Quad Speed CD Rom for A500 ....£129
(needs Alfapower V6.8 or higher)
Quad Speed CD Rom for A600/A1200 £149
(inc CD32 emulation)
Quad Speed CD Rom
for A1500/A2000/
A4000 ....£109



External IDE CD Rom Upgrade Kit

comprises of:
Metal case, screws, Power Connector (draws power from disk drive port) Power Connector (for optional external Power supply), IDE ribbon cable, Stereo Audio Cables (will require an interface).

Kit price £39



Special Offer for this Month

Quantum 850mb
3.5" HD £125
Quantum 1.7Gig
3.5" HD £195
Quantum 2.1Gig
3.5" HD £230
2.5" IDE 60Mb
Hard Drive.....................£55
2.5" IDE 340Mb
Hard Drive £120
2.5" WD 540Mb
Hard Drive £129

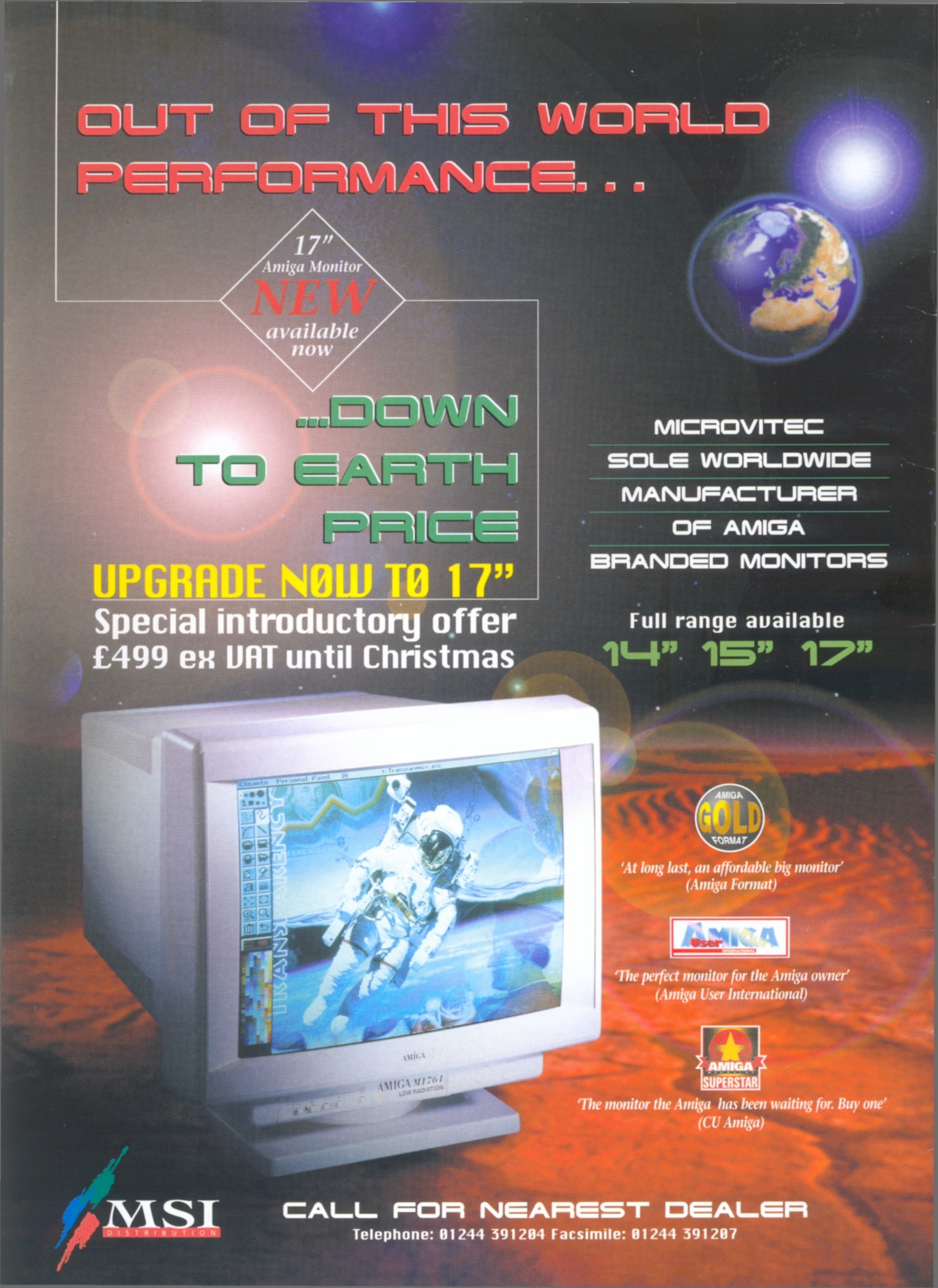
STAR BUY
Viper Board A1230 33MHz with 16Mb Memory £199
8 Speed CD Rom Drive for A1200/A600 ....£189
Migraph's Multipass OCR Software with manuals (limited stock) £20

Accelerator Boards

A1220 APOLLO
Accelerator Board £99.95
A1220 APOLLO
Accelerator Board + 4Mb.........................£129.00
A1230 VIPER
Accelerator Board 33MHz £119.95
A1230 VIPER
Accelerator Board + 4Mb 33MHz £169.95
A1230 VIPER
Accelerator Board + 8Mb 33MHz £180.00

All prices include VAT. Please add £3.50 P&P for items under £30.00, £5.00 for items over £30.00, £8.00 P&P for Scanners, Speakers & Hard Drives, £10.00 courier for next day. Tax Free Export Orders Welcome.
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